

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE



Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI
Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI

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Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI

Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI

Devamatha Creations
Thrissur – 680 022
2022

Dedication

*In Joyful Remembrance of
Fr Linston's Day of
Priestly Ordination
(30-12-2021)*

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INTELLIGIBLE**
Religious Non-fiction
Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI
Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI

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Message

I have great pleasure and satisfaction in presenting this e-book, entitled '*HOMILIES made more IN[^]TELLIGIBLE*' to the people of God, and particularly to preachers of the Word of God in English. Co-authored by Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI and Rev Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI, this book is rich in content, with Homilies based on various Gospel passages/verses and is probably the first ever e-book published, with presentation of Homilies marked with phonetic signs and notations to show their rhythm and intonation in accordance with the BBC variety of English speech. When the preachers deliver the homilies in English following the guidelines laid down in the Introduction to the book, they are supposed to become more successful in making their homilies more intelligible and effective.

I congratulate the authors, Fr Jose and Fr Linston on their painstaking preparation of this e-book, and wish and pray that the book attract vast

readership among both native and non-native speakers of English.

With love and blessings,

+ Andrews Thazhath

Mar Andrews Thazhath
Metropolitan Archbishop of Trichur

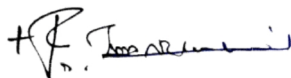


Message

I am immensely pleased to congratulate Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI and Rev Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI on bringing out this e-book, quite rare of its kind, and a very painstaking one, with the title, '*HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE*'. I am sure the book will prove to be of great help to those engaged in evangelical work within and outside the country when it comes to giving Homilies in English. Printed with only a minimum number of phonetic signs and notations internationally used and which have been explained and illustrated in the Introduction to the book, I must say, this book is of great pedagogical value, well targeted to help both native and non-native speakers of English deliver homilies more intelligibly and effectively.

Fr Jose with his expertise and experience in teaching English Linguistics and Phonetics at various levels and Fr Linston with his studies and training in audio-video and digital communions are really competent in authoring a book of this sort.

So kudos to both the authors and I wish them both success in bringing out still more creations in future to the service of people and glory of God.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by a stylized name.

Mar Tony Neelankavil
Auxiliary Bishop of Archdiocese of Thrissur



CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

CMI PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE

Chavara Hills, P.B. No. 3105, Kakkanad P.O.
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ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA
1805-1871

Fr. Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General

REF: PG/324/2021
FILE: Greetings

24 November 2021

Message

I am immensely proud of the e-book Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI have brought out with the title of '*HOMILIES made more IN[^]TELLIGIBLE*'. This e-book, I must say, is unique and pioneering in the sense that it is probably the first-ever publication in English in the field of Evangelization. The homilies in the book are based on various passages/verses from the gospels and are marked with special signs and notations used in English Phonetics. Delivering the homilies in the light of these notations that have been well explained and illustrated in the Introduction to the book will go a long way in proclaiming the Word more intelligibly and effectively, with meaning and feeling, so as to impact the mind and heart of readers/listeners.

I offer my congratulations and all the blessing of God on the authors of the book and hope and

pray that the book find worldwide circulation and readership.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Chathamparampil".

Fr Dr Thomas Chathamparampil
CMI
Prior General



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Fr. Dr. Josey Thamarassery CMI
Vicar General
Dept. Evangelization & Pastoral Ministry

Message

It gives me great pride and joy to present to deliverers of homilies in English worldwide the e-book entitled '*HOMILIES made more IN^TELLI-GIBLE*' co-authored by Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI. This book is a well-conceived one and I daresay, the first-ever of its kind in the field of Evangelization. It is a serious and substantial work based on various gospel passages/verses aimed at enabling deliverers of homilies in English to do it more intelligibly and effectively. For this purpose sentences/utterances in the homilies have been marked with phonetic signs and notations commonly used in English Phonetics to show their rhythm and intonation. The work has been meticulously and painstakingly done to the credit of the authors and to the benefit of preachers. No doubt the book will prove to be of great use in liturgical and pastoral circles.

I wish this e-book the great success it deserves in circulation and readership.



Fr Josey Thamarassery CMI
Vicar General and General Councillor for
Evangelization & Pastoral Ministry



Message

Every language has its own features with regard to the rhythm and tones used in speech. Identification of the syllables carrying rhythm (beat) and tones used in speech matters as they are important in conveying the meaning and rendering the speech intelligible. This is what Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI have done to the script of homilies in the e-book entitled '*HOMILIES made more IN^TELLIGIBLE*'. The homilies based on various Gospel passages/verses have already been delivered by Fr Jose and the same uploaded to YouTube by Fr Linston. Now the scripts prepared by Fr Jose have been worked on and are made available on YouTube by Fr Linston. This work as I understand is a very painstaking one and I am glad to know that this is meant for release in joyful remembrance of Fr Linston's sacerdotal ordination.

May I wish both the authors of the book every success in finding large readership online with their innovative presentation of homilies.

Rev Dr Davis Panakkal CMI
Provincial of the CMI
Devamatha Province of Thrissur



Message

'*HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE* is perhaps the first ever e-book to be published in the Province and the first of its kind in the field of evangelization.

The book is the script of homilies already delivered online by Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and uploaded to YouTube by Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI a year ago.

The idea of bringing out the homilies delivered in the book mode was mooted from different quarters so as to help speakers, particularly priests, deliver homilies in English in a manner that is internationally intelligible. To achieve this end the authors have marked the sentences/utterances in the homilies with phonetic notations pertaining to the rhythm and tones characterizing the BBC variety of Spoken English.

May I congratulate at this juncture Fr Jose and Fr Linston on the laborious and time-consuming task undertaken to bring the book to completion which I am sure will serve as a guide to those engaged in the proclamation and interpretation of the Word of God in English.

I wish and hope that this book find large readership both among the native and non-native speakers of English worldwide.

Fr Rijo Payyappilly CMI
Councillor for Evangelization
CMI Devamatha Province of Thrissur



Message

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:15) All Christians are called with a special mission to preach the gospel and to lead the listeners to faith and faith driven life. Knowing Jesus, the Lord and saviour, is the right and privilege of every human person and hence every believer is called to be a missionary to share the faith. That is why St Paul asks the pertinent question, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Rom 10:14) Faith, of course is the gift of God and at the same time the preacher has to make his preaching intelligible to the hearers to avoid the Babel syndrome. Though it is difficult for a missionary to preach the gospel in foreign languages, the Lord leads him to unknown cultures and languages and he or she has no choice, but to speak the language of the place where he/she has been placed. This rare book, *'HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE'*, written by both Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI is a great help to non-native

speakers of English language to make their proclamation intelligible and inspiring.

I do congratulate Rev Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI on their creative effort to make the Word of God intelligible and interesting to the preachers and listeners. This is indeed an awesome work and is a great support to all the missionaries who need to serve the English-speaking communities. This book offers great support to the seminarians who prepare for the priestly ordination to make their preaching appealing and to the understanding of all the listeners. Heartiest congratulations to Rev Fr Davis Panakkal, the Provincial and Rev Fr Rijo Payyappilly, Provincial Councillor, for encouraging the authors to publish the work for common use. May the readers of the book be guided by the Holy Spirit to understand and proclaim the living word of God to inspire people to authentic Christian life!

Fr Paul Achandy CMI
Rector



CARMEL VIDYA BHAVAN

PB. No. 3030, 26/4, Sainikwadi, Vadgaon Sheri, Pune 411014



Message

Sincere congratulations to Rev Dr Jose Pellisery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI for the sublime and exceptional endeavour of bringing out '*HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE*'. Dr Jose being a gifted preacher for years in the Lord's Vineyard and Fr Linston dawning his priestly preaching ministry shortly hand out resourceful and practical insights and ideas on breaking the word of God in an intelligible fashion. This is an excellent resource book delving the beauty and depth of the gospels in a more comprehensible manner and accessible to both preachers of the word of God and listeners alike. This e-book is a helpful matrix for those who thirst for the profundity of the word of God. Each homily is a masterpiece on its own with a meticulous and succinct simplification of the gospels coupled with the guidelines for the speech rhythm and intonation of the language. The illustrations on the signs and notations attached along with the reflections facilitate the preacher/reader of this book to deliver the Gospels more effectively and coherently. The in-depth theological and biblical expositions on the selected passages from the four gospels and

the tips and tricks cited to delivering homilies in a quite intelligible manner make the book indeed a tool of the trade. The exceedingly simplistic format and stunning writing style make this book an easy-to-read-and-grasp at a global sphere. Well worth getting hold of this book if you want to taste the richness of the gospels along with the preacher's guide. I wish substantial readership and indubitable hype around '*HOMILIES made more IN^{TELLIGIBLE}*.

Fr Joy Puthussery CMI
Rector, Carmel Vidya Bhavan, Pune



Message

God reaches out to the lay faithful through the preacher. Hence, it is paramount for a pastor to prepare the homily in a manner that touches the hearts of the people. When Jesus preached, people were amazed at his teachings (Mk 6:2) and he spoke to them as one with authority (Mk 1:27). In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis says, “Homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to the people” (EG 135).

The effort of Fr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI to help the preachers to communicate the Word of God with clarity and diction through the e-book entitled '*HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE*' is commendable. The homilies in the e-book have come from the heart of Fr Jose and I am certain that they will touch the hearts of the people. The uniqueness of this e-book is that it helps a preacher to communicate the homilies in English with accent, rhythm and intonation. Fr Jose has prepared it from years of his teaching experience in communicative English.

May I congratulate Fr Jose on breaking the Word of God and presenting it in a manner that is

intelligible to the English-speaking world and Fr Linston for giving technical assistance to reach the homilies to a wider audience! May the Word of God be proclaimed and the Kingdom of God be established here on earth!

Fr Davis Varayilan CMI
Rector
Samanvaya Theology College, Bhopal



Message

A prominent Churchman once asked the famous English actor David Garrick: “Why is it that I, who speak great truths, can only fill my church once a week, while you, who speak merely fiction, can fill a theatre every night?” Garrick replied: “Because you speak truth as if it were fiction, while I speak fiction as if it were truth.”

This comment is worth reflecting on when I venture to comment on the e-book entitled, *'HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE*, brought out by Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI.

Truths are not to be presented prosaically or monotonously, but passionately, interestingly and imaginatively. Jesus, in the gospels, is said to have spoken as no one had ever before, and with authority in terms of his words and deeds, to the effect that his listeners sat through his teachings in the synagogues and in the open air, foregoing their food and sleep.

The reason why homilies are not always listened to in appreciation and enjoyment as it should be by the faithful may be a quite simple one – just that we seldom hear homilies delivered as it should be, that is, with enthusiasm, imagina-

tion and enjoyment, inspiring the listeners to worship God in spirit and truth.

It is here the e-book by Fr Jose and Fr Linston comes in handy as a guide for preachers of homilies in connection with church services. With phonetics markings of the characteristic rhythm and the appropriate tones to be used in each sentence/utterance in the homilies in the book, the authors have accomplished a very difficult task, so brilliantly to their credit.

It is my earnest prayer and hope that the preachers of homilies in English worldwide be benefited by this book by being helped to lead thousands of believers in Jesus to the throne of God and worship Him in spirit and truth.

Fr Dr Roy Palatty CMI
Director, Shalom TV (English Section), USA

Acknowledgements

Our hearts are replete with thankfulness to Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath and Auxiliary Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil of the Archdiocese of Thrissur for their kind messages and paternal blessings on the book

We gratefully acknowledge our deep indebtedness to Fr Dr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI, Prior General of CMI congregation, and Rev Fr Josey Thamarassery CMI, Vicar General and General Councillor for Evangelization & Pastoral Ministry, for their messages with appreciative words and blessings on the book.

We offer our sincere thanks to Rev Fr Dr Davis Panakkal CMI, Provincial of CMI Devamatha Province of Thrissur and to Rev Fr Rijo Payyappilly CMI, Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry for their heartfelt messages and encouragement given during the preparation of the book.

We wish to express our particular thanks and reverence to Rev Fr Dr Paul Achandy CMI, Rector, Dharmaram college, Bangalore, Rev Fr Dr, Davis Varayilan CMI, Rector, Samanvaya Theological College, Bhopal; Rev Fr Joy Puthussery CMI Rector, Carmel Vidyabhavan, Pune; and lastly, but far from the least, Rev Fr Dr Roy Palatty CMI, Director, Shalom TV (English section) U.S.A. for their

expert opinions and evaluative comments on the work

Our sincere thanks goes to Joseph V M who with his graduation in Multimedia studies did the tough job of typing the text with phonetic signs and notations and did it remarkably well to the credit of his expertise plus patience, persistence, and perseverance.

In fine, we frankly acknowledge that there is always scope for further improvement in the content and manner of presentation of the homilies. There can be of course, more than one opinion, particularly on the number of tone group division(s) made in a sentence /utterance and the location of the tonic syllable shown in the tone groups depending on the meaning the speaker has in his/her mind; and therefore we lay no claim to perfection, leaving it all to the option of readers to make constructive comments and concrete suggestions for possible improvement, if needed.

Fr Jose & Fr Linston

Introduction

There are four main features that have to be realized in English speech to ensure its intelligibility: they are

1. phonemes or speech sounds
2. word stress or word accent
3. sentence stress or rhythm
4. intonation or the system of tones used.

Of these the first two features are concerned with pronunciation of individual words and they are shown in general dictionaries, and more elaborately, in pronouncing dictionaries. In this book our concern is with connected speech or discourse, and therefore a discussion on the first two features is not taken up in this introduction and the readers'/learners' knowledge of them is taken for granted; and the presentation of homilies in this book with special signs and notations is based on the last two main features, namely, rhythm and intonation of English speech.

Two Types of Rhythm

In a broad sense there are two types of rhythm followed in world languages, namely, syllable-timed rhythm and stress-timed rhythm. In languages where syllable-timed is followed (for example, Indian languages in general) all the syllables/words in a word group (sentence) are more

or less equally important; whereas in English, some syllables/words in word groups (namely, content words such as Main verbs, Adverbs, Nouns, Adjectives, Demonstratives and WH-words) are more important than others and therefore they are generally stressed. Structure words (such as Articles, Auxiliaries (helping verbs), Prepositions, Conjunctions, Pronouns (personal, relative and indefinite) in word groups are not generally stressed. And it is the regular occurrence of various patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables/words in word groups (sentences/utterances) that gives rise to stress-timed rhythm in native English speech. Stressed syllables in word groups may appear in two forms:

- Rhythm unit(s)
- Stress group(s)

Rhythm unit means, one stressed syllable which may be preceded and followed by unstressed syllable(s). Stress group means, one stressed syllable which may be followed by unstressed syllable(s) in a rhythm unit. Whatever be the form the stressed syllables appear in, they are to be given nearly the same amount of time in pronunciation, irrespective of the number of unstressed syllables between them; and it is this almost equal or regular intervals of time between the stressed syllables that gives English speech its characteristic rhythm, namely, the stress-timed rhythm.

For example, in the word group (here it's a sentence):

"I am the 'living 'bread that came 'down from 'heaven",

I am the living → forms a rhythm unit, because the stressed syllable 'liv is preceded by the unstressed syllables, I am the and followed by the unstressed syllable, -ing;

bread → forms a stress group, because the stressed syllable 'bread is not preceded by any unstressed syllable(s) and here it is not followed by any unstressed syllable(s);

that came down → forms a rhythm unit, because the stressed syllable

'down is preceded by the unstressed syllables that came;

from heaven → forms a rhythm unit, because the stressed syllable 'heav- is preceded by the unstressed syllable from and followed by the unstressed syllable –

en

The difference between 'Rhythm unit' and 'stress group' is that in 'Rhythm unit' there will be unstressed syllable(s) preceding the stressed syllable



Scan this QR code or click it to listen to the examples in the audio.

whereas in Stress group there will not be any unstressed syllable(s) preceding the stressed syllable.

What the stress-timed rhythm says is that the time intervals between the stressed syllables in a word group should be nearly the same, irrespective of the number or unstressed syllables between them; that is, the time you take to say I am the 'liv-
ing – 'bread – that came 'down – from 'heaven
should almost be the same, irrespective of the number of unstressed syllables between them.

Intonation

Speech is a stream or movement of words wherein the syllables flow in regular recurrence of beats (stressed syllables) with its own rhythm, called stress-timed rhythm, and the resultant melody is called its intonation. In other words, intonation is the system of tones/tunes or patterns of variations in pitch in speech. And 'pitch', as we all know, is a musical term, and it is produced by the frequency of the vibration of the vocal cords. If the vocal cords vibrate slow (low frequency) the pitch is low. If fast (high frequency) the pitch is high. The linguistic term for pitch is tone.

Native speakers of English use so many tones/tunes in their speech. But language specific tones used by them are the following. Their names, shapes, and descriptions are given below:

1. Falling tone/Glide-down [ˋ]

In the pronunciation of a stressed syllable/word with a falling tone, the pitch of the voice is allowed to fall from a high level to a low level.

2. Rising tone/Glide-up [ˊ]

In the pronunciation of a stressed syllable with a rising tone, the pitch of the voice is allowed to rise from a low level to a high level.

3. Falling – Rising tone/The Dive [ˋˊ]

In the pronunciation of a stressed syllable/word with a falling-rising tone, the pitch of the voice is first allowed to fall from a high level to a low level and then to rise to the middle pitch level of the voice. Sometimes the falling part is given to one syllable/word and the rising part to another syllable/word. This is called Divided Falling – Rising tone.

4. Rising – Falling tone [ˊˋ]

In the pronunciation of a stressed syllable/word with a rising-falling tone, the pitch of the voice is first allowed to rise from a low level to a high level and then to fall to the middle pitch level of the voice.

Tones involving pitch movement or fluctuation are also called Kinetic tones, namely, [ˋ, ˊ, ˋˊ, ˊˋ]. Of these four Kinetic tones, the last two [ˋˊ, ˊˋ]

are not frequently used as the first two one [ˈ, ˌ] in English speech.

The Tonic syllable/The Nucleus

The syllable carrying any one of the 4 Kinetic tones shown above is called the Tonic syllable. It is also called the Nucleus, that is the syllable on which a pitch movement is initiated.

One's ability to speak or read well in English depends to a large extent, on using an appropriate tone/tune on every Tone group.

The Division of an Utterance/Sentence into Tone groups

We talk not in single words but in groups of words. These word groups/utterances may be said with a pause or without a pause. When a group is short or of intermediate length we need not pause.

For example:

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Jesus wept.
4. Go in peace.
5. Your faith has saved you.
6. The kingdom of heaven has come near.
7. What do you think of the Messiah?
8. I am the living bread that has come down from heaven.

These utterances will normally be said as one Tone group.

But if a word group is long, we need to pause, to take breath. In such cases, the Tone groups are sometimes called Breath groups. For example:

1. // On this rock, / I will build my church. //
2. // Go therefore into the main streets, / and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet. //
3. // As he was setting out on a journey, / a man ran up and knelt before him, / and asked him, / “Good Teacher, / what must I do to inherit eternal life?” //

From the above examples you can see that a Tone group boundary is marked by an oblique double bar. The sentence opens with a sentence boundary and ends with another sentence boundary.

You can also see from the above examples that when a word group or sentence is long, you have to pause at appropriate places, so that you do not destroy the sense. That is why Tone groups are also referred to as Sense groups.

Sometimes punctuation marks can give you a clue to the division of an utterance into Tone groups. But they are not always sure guide to the division as made in our book. Of course, a full stop always indicates the end of a Tone group; so

do colons, semi-colons and sometimes the commas as well do so.

The Location of the Tonic syllable/the Nucleus

Every tone group in a sentence must have a Tonic syllable/the Nucleus, i.e., the syllable on which a pitch movement is initiated. It is the most prominent syllable in a tone group.

Usually the Tonic syllable is located on the last stressed of the last content word (i.e., Nouns, Adjectives, Main verbs, Adverbs, Demonstratives and WH-words). There are, however many exceptions to this rule, which the learners find discussed in books on English phonetics.

Now we will take up the longest of sentences given before and divide it into Tone groups, marking each tone group boundary with a single bar (/), and enclosing the sentence with double bar (//), and locating the Tonic syllable in each Tone group, marking the appropriate tone on it.

// As he was setting out on a ,journey / a man ran 'up and 'knelt before him / and ,asked him / Good ,Teacher / what must I 'do to inherit eternal ,life //

In the sentence above five (5) divisions of Tone groups are there. In the second and fifth Tone groups we have Pretonic syllables, (i.e., syllables occurring before Tonic syllables) marked with a small vertical bar (ran 'up, 'do).

Pretonic syllable

The stressed syllable that does not initiate a pitch movement is called a Pretonic syllable. A pretonic syllable in a tone group carries stress/beat and a level tone. The pretonic syllables in a sentence are always said a level tone [ˈ]. A tone group in a sentence may carry one or more than one pretonic syllable. The Pretonic syllables are said on level tone and also louder, higher in pitch and with longer duration than other unstressed syllable(s) that may be present between the stressed ones.

A Note on Notations and Typography

It may be noted that only a minimum and necessary number of signs and types have been used in the text of the homilies in order not to cause eyestrain for the learner/reader. In the presentation of homilies, all types of punctuation mark used in written English have been omitted, and only notations and signs conventionally used in English Phonetics are to be found. Hence the learner is reminded of the following by way of concluding this Introduction.

1. Oblique single bar in red ink [/] within sentences denotes end of tone groups (also known as Sense groups/Breath groups/Tone units). The notation is called Tone group boundary. The learners while deliv-

ering the homilies are supposed to make a pause only at the Tone group boundary, on the same tone as carried by the Tonic syllable in the Tone group.

2. Oblique double bar in red ink [//] within which each sentence is to be enclosed has been used only at the end of sentences in the text and not at the beginning in order not to clutter up the pages with too many bars.
3. A small vertical bar in red ink ['] is placed before and above the syllable or word having the stress/beat. The syllable with this sign does not initiate a pitch movement. The pretonic syllables in a Tone group/sentence are always said on level tone. A word group or sentence may carry one or more than one Pretonic syllable.
4. Of the 4 Tonic syllables used in English speech [˘, ˙, ˇ, ˆ] only 3 are found used and printed in red in the text of homilies. Each tone group in a sentence carries one Tonic syllable. Long sentences are divided into more than one Tone group. Tonic syllable in a Tone group carries both stress/beat and a tone.
5. Conventionally, Post-tonic syllable(s) in the form of a small vertical bar [.] is to be placed before and below the syllables of

content words following the Tonic syllables in a Tone group. But this has not been done in the text for the same reason as given for omission of sentence boundary marking [//] at the beginning of sentences in the text, and also because Post-tonic syllables in a Tone group is the continuation of the Tonic syllables, sharing the same time (beat) and tone as given for the Tonic one.

The learners/readers of the book are assured of success in delivering homilies effectively and intelligibly, provided they follow the guidelines given for the signs and notations used in the text and bear in mind the instructions and explanations given regarding English speech rhythm and intonation.

Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI
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'Mathew's ' Gospel

Mt 1:18–24



She will bear a ,son / and you are to 'name him
'Jesus / for he will 'save his people from their 'sins
// (v. 21)



To'day is the so'lemnity of St ,Joseph / a
saint of ,scripture / the foster 'father of
our 'Lord Jesus 'Christ // ,Though an 'ob-
ject of the uni'versal and absolute 'faith of the
Christian 'world from the ,first / the de'votion to
St Joseph came to be ,popular / com'paratively at
a 'later 'date // 'When once it be'gan / 'men
seemed sur'prised / that it had not been 'thought
of be'fore / and ,now / we hold him 'next to the
Blessed ,Virgin / in our re'ligious a'ffection and
vene'ration //

'As you take one 'long 'look at the choirs of
'saints in 'heaven in your mind's ,eye / you catch
'sight of saints 'dazzling in all ,colours / in terms
of 'witnessing to Christ's 'life in their ,lives / as
'martyrs in royal ,red / wonder-,workers / 'elo-
quent ,preachers / 'eminent ,authors / 'mighty
,leaders / un'tiring ,missionaries / and 'numerous
'others with their multiple ,talents / and most tre'-
mendous human ac'complishments //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Then you come to to`day's saint // 'What
dazzling 'colours is he found `in // 'Not of course
in the royal 'red of ,martyrs / nor the 'gold of a
world ,leader / nor the 'pulpit of a great ,preacher
/ nor the 'scroll of a great `author //

`No // What is caught ,sight of is / just a 'small
,workshop / 'adjacent to a little ,hut / the ,door of
which says / 'Joseph and `Son / `carpenters //

But 'then when the whole 'galaxy of saints in
'heaven start telling 'stories of their 'earthly a`c-
complishments and a,chievements / 'which of
them has the 'last `laugh // It's 'none other than
the 'saint of the ,day / St `Joseph / the 'humble
`carpenter // 'Which of the other 'saints had the
'honour of being en,trusted with / the 'earthly
pa'rental 'rights over child ,Jesus / con'ceived in
'Mary from the Holy `Spirit // 'Which of the other
,saints / except `Blessed Mother ,Mary can say /
every 'day for almost 'thirty ,years / I sat at 'table
with the 'growing ,boy / who was the 'Son of God
and the 'Saviour of `mankind // 'Daily I 'watched
Him shaping into ,manhood / and 'helped him
grow into 'good ,stature / so as to e'nable him to
undertake his public ,ministry / in view of the
sal'vation of `man // I 'taught him his `prayers // I
'showed him 'how to make 'chairs and `tables // I
couldn't 'count the times I held him in my ,arms /

when he was \little / the 'times he 'hugged me and
 ,kissed me / the 'meals we ate to,gether / the 'miles
 we travelled to,gether / the 'joy we had in ,working
 together / and in the ,end / my having had the
 good 'fortune of enjoying a 'peaceful ,death / in
 the 'presence of 'Mary my ,wife / and 'Jesus my
 'son in their \flesh //

\Prayer

*St ,Joseph / foster 'Father of ,Jesus / you 'are and always
 'were a 'humble ,man / a 'good and \holy man // You
 gave pro'tection to child 'Jesus and 'Mary the \Mother //
 You 'ever kept 'close to 'Jesus and ,Mary / and pro'tected
 them from all im'pending ,dangers / that were to be\fall
 on them / and thus 'saved the 'Holy ,Family / the 'model
 of all 'Christian 'families and the \Church // O 'guard-
 ian St ,Joseph / we 'pray that 'you be ever ,with us / and
 inter'cede for us in ,heaven / for our pro'tection and
 sal\vation // A\men //*

Mt 1:18–25



'Look / the 'virgin shall con'ceive and bear a 'son /
and they shall 'name him E,mmanuel / which
means 'God is 'with us // (v. 21)



To'day being the 'Sunday preceding
,Christmas / the 'subject for our re'flec-
tion and medi'tation is the gospel 'passage
from Mathew's ,gospel / ch ,1 / 1'8–2,5 / that
na,rrates / how the 'birth of our 'Lord Jesus took
'place // In this ,narrative / 'Mathew presents
'Joseph as the 'central 'character // It is to ,Joseph /
'God's reve'lation comes // A'ppearing to him in a
,dream / an 'angel of the Lord re,veals to Joseph /
that 'Mary who had been en,gaged to him / has
'now conceived a ,child / thanks to the 'work of
the Holy 'Spirit // The angel ,asks Joseph / 'not to
re,ject Mary / on account of her con'ception //
'Joseph had been 'then re,solved / to dis'miss Mary
in ,secret / be'fore the reve'lation was made to him
by the 'angel / as he had got disi'llusioned with his
wife ,Mary / ,who / though 'known for her 'inno-
cence and in,tegrity / was found to be with 'child
without his 'knowledge //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

In this ,context / it's ,necessary / that we under-
'stand the pro,cedures / to be 'followed in the con'-
duct of ,nuptials / according to 'typical 'Jewish
tra'dition // What takes 'place ,first / is the de'c-
ision to `marriage // In 'certain ,circumstances /
'even in the 'childhood of the 'people to get ,mar-
ried / the de'cision to marriage will have been
'taken by the `parents concerned // The ,reason
behind this / is the 'Jewish ,thinking / that be'cause
'marriage being a 'very important and serious
,matter / the decision-'making should not be 'left
to the im'petuousness of 'young `hearts / but to
the 'wisdom and dis`cretion of the parents //

The 'second phase of marriage is be'trothal /
or en'gagement // This is an o'fficial pro,cedure /
for va'lidifying the de'cision on ,marriage / taken
by the 'parents be,fore / for the 'people to be
'married // In ,this phase / if the 'girl is ,not will-
ing / to go 'by the decision taken be'fore by the
,parents / she is 'free to with`draw from the de-
cision // But 'once the be'trothal is ,over / on 'no
grounds is with'drawal `possible //

The 'third phase of 'marriage 'ceremony is
con,ducted / only after 'passage of 'one ,year /
'after betrothal // 'Even after be,etrothal / 'man and
'woman were con'sidered to be 'husband and `wife
// 'Still they were not en'titled to enjoy the ,rights /

pertaining to 'husband and `wife // They 'were to spend 'one 'full ,year / in their 'own ,house / wi'thout being 'known to each `other //

We come to 'meet 'Joseph and 'Mary in the ,Bible / when they were at their 'second phase of `marriage // 'Even if their marriage 'ceremony were 'still to be ,over / it was 'quite be'wildering and disa'ppointing for 'Joseph to ,know / that 'Mary is bearing a ,child / without his `knowledge // Now for 'him to re'ject 'Mary from his ,life / the pro'cedure to be 'followed for a di'vorce was a `must // But it gave 'pain to his 'heart to ,think / that it would a'mount to making ,Mary / an 'object of 'public dis'grace and ri'dicule // So as re'quired by the ,law / he was for 'signing a testi'monial in front of a ,witness / to e'ffect a di'vorce in ,secret / wi'thout making the 'reason for it 'known to the `public // It may be borne in ,mind / that 'Joseph was ,one / who 'wouldn't ,deviate a bit / in the ob'servance of Mo'saic ,law / that was 'then in `prevalence // 'That's why the 'title of a ,just man / is a'ttributed to him in the `Bible //

The inter'vention of the ,angel of God / proved to be great 'comfort and `solace to Joseph / as he had 'found himself caught 'up with a 'great 'trial and `difficulty // He had been discon'certingly ,thinking about / how ,Mary / 'known for her 'in-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

nocence and in,tegrity / had came upon 'this sort of 'danger // When he was told by the ,angel / that the 'child conceived in 'Mary was ,from the Holy Spirit / it was 'not 'difficult for him to under'stand that 'mystery / as there had been 'numerous 'instances in the Old ,Testament times / when the 'angel of God a'ppeared and re'vealed to 'men divine 'mysteries // For e,xample / we come a'cross such 'instances in the Book of ,Genesis (1,6 / '10) / 'Exodus ,3 / ,2 / and 2 'Samuel (2,4 / 1,6) / and in the Book of ,Judges / (1,3 / ,3) / the 'angel of the Lord had given pre'diction about the 'birth of 'Sampson //

The 'angel is en'trusting to ,Joseph / 'all the 'earthly pa'rental 'rights over the ,child / conceived in 'Mary from the 'Holy 'Spirit // When Joseph is 'asked by the ,angel / to 'give the name of ,Jesus / to the 'son Mary will give ,birth to / it ,means / that according to 'Jewish tra,dition / it is the 'right of the ,father / to give 'name to any 'child // It'll be the pre'rogative of ,Joseph / to name the 'son going to be 'born of 'Mary // The name / 'Jesus carries a 'special 'meaning // It is the 'Greek form of the He'braic or 'Jewish ,name 'Joshua / which means Je'hovah is sal'vation / or Je'hovah 'saves // He will 'save His 'people from their 'sins // 'That's why he will be called 'Jesus //

'Joseph 'did under'stand this 'narrative of the
'birth of the 'saviour 'promised // He was only 'too
'pleased to take 'Mary as his ,wife / and to live
to,gether / 'after the marriage `ceremony //

'Here the e'vangelist re'fers to the 'prophecy of
I,saiah (Is 7:14) / the most 'frequently 'quoted
'prophet in the `gospels / 'Look / the 'virgin shall
con'ceive and bear a `son / and they shall 'name
him E,mmanuel / which means 'God is `with us //

This is a 'very 'beautiful ,text / which sets the 'tone
for the 'final phase of `Advent // According to I'sa-
iah's ,prophecy / with the 'birth of 'this 'son from a
,virgin / whom the 'people of O'T times had been
'looking forward to ,seeing / the time of sal'vation
has `dawned // With the 'birth of this ,son / God's
'presence amidst ,men / has be'gun in a 'special
`way // 'That's why he is called E,mmanuel /
meaning 'God is `with us // 'God has taken `birth /
and is now 'one with 'men in their `lives // As 'John
says in his ,gospel / The 'Word became ,flesh / and
'lived among us / and we have seen his ,glory / the
glory of a 'father's only ,son / full of 'grace and
`truth // (Jn 1:14)

The 2⁵th verse in to'day's gospel ,passage / that
is he had 'no ,marital relations with her / until she
had borne a `son / has 'caused some misunder-
'standing among ,people / particularly among

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'some sections of 'Protestants // This 'sentence is used by ,Mathew / 'only to make it more ,clear / and to add more ,emphasis / in the Semitic style of ,language / that 'Jesus is born of a ,virgin / by the ac'tivity of the Holy 'Spirit // This under-'standing of the ,verse as / 'Joseph and Mary 'lived together like 'husband and ,wife / enjoying the 'marital rights after the ,birth of Jesus / gave 'rise to Hel'divian and Jo'vinian 'heresies in the 'Church // 'Mathew wrote his 'gospel in 'Greek / and in ,Greek language / the 'usage of until she had borne a 'son / we are ,told / carries a ,meaning / different from what 'we understand by it // There is 'no indi'cation 'anywhere in the ,scripture / to 'show that 'Joseph and 'Mary had a 'son or 'daughter be'sides Jesus // The 'point that 'Mathew e,stablishes is / that 'Joseph is 'not the bio'logical father of 'Jesus // The 'person who brought 'about the con'ception of Jesus in ,Mary's womb / is the 'Spirit of God / and 'that is the 'meaning and thrust of 'Mathew's 'language // The ex'pression / ,Spirit of God / is used in O,T / 'also has the meaning of the my'sterious 'power of God // The 'reading of the 'verse in ,Greek / will give a 'mean-'ing al,most like / he 'not even had any 'marital re-lations with her //

'Mathew who na'rrates the 'virgin birth of
 ,Lord Jesus / is in 'fact trying to re,veal / a 'new
 face of the my'sterious work of the 'Spirit of God
 // This Divine 'Child as a mi'raculous phe,no-
 menon / and born on 'earth as a human 'being by
 the work of the ,Spirit of God / will re'veal 'what
 'God 'really ,is / and what 'man should 'truly 'be //
 With the 'Advent of ,Jesus / the 'Word made ,flesh
 / ,God / going be'yond the level of 'someone at
 ,work / 'far at a 'distance from ,man / 'enters a
 state of ,life / where 'God is E'mmanuel / 'God is
 'with us' // May 'this year's 'Christmas and
 cele,brations / 'help us 'grow to the level of ex'per-
 iencing ,God / in all 'walks and 'circumstances of
 our 'daily 'life //

Prayer

*'Blessed Infant ,Jesus / our ,Saviour / we be'lieve in your
 being our E,mmanuel / our 'God ,with us / in our 'own
 ,nature / and in our 'own 'interest // We 'thank you for
 your Incar,nation / and there'by being our sal,vation /
 bringing 'God and 'man to'gether // That you are 'God
 ,with us / gives us immense 'joy and 'happiness // Grant
 us the ,grace / to be 'men of ,goodwill / so as to 'be ,with
 you / as 'you are ,with us / to en'sure our ever'lasting
 'peace and ,hope / on 'earth and for'ever // 'Make us all
 ,worthy / to 'share in your 'conquest of ,sin / and*

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

*there'by our sal\vation / so that 'none of us shall \perish /
but 'all shall be given \life / and at long ,last / we be 'led
into the 'good 'land of the ,promise / that is 'life e'ternal
for \all // A\men //*

Mt 2:1–12



'Wisemen from the 'East came to Je,rusalem / ask-
ing 'where is the 'child who has been born `king of
the Jews // (v. 2)



Everyone is probably fa'miliar with the
game of Treasure `Hunting / there is
'treasure somewhere a`round // It is
kept `hidden // It 'has to be sought ,after / and 'is
to be found `out // During the ,search for it / you
may be 'given 'several 'tips or `clues there of // It's
a ,story / almost 'similar to ,this / that we 'listened
to in to'day's gospel `passage / the 'story of the
,search for God / made by the 'Magi or 'Wisemen
from the `East //

The good 'news of great ,joy / that To 'you is
born this 'day in the city of ,David / a 'Saviour who
is the Me'ssiah the `Lord / is 'still ringing the `bells
with us // It is 'not e,nough / that the `Saviour is
,born // How 'many are the 'pearls that lie ,hidden
/ un'seen by `people // How 'many are the 'flowers
that go ,faded / whose 'fragrance is not enjoyed
by `anyone // 'What counts 'most in ,life / is to
find 'out the 'Saviour born a human ,being / and
'welcome Him to one's `life / and there'by make

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

one's sal'vation \possible // For ,this / a 'search is a
'must / some ,hunger / some de'sire is an e'ssential
re\quirement //

What we 'see in the ,Wisemen / is 'this ex'plor-
ative ,Zeal / an in'satiable ,hunger / an in'tense
de'sire // Having ob'served the 'rare ,star in the
sky / and arriving at the con'clusion that 'King of
the Jews is ,born / they set 'out on a \journey / for'-
getting ,everything / and 'leaving their 'near and
,dear ones / setting their 'sights on the 'newborn
'King // (It may be here re,membered / that ac-
cording to 'ancient astro'logical ,rule / 'Jupiter 'in-
dicated 'kingship or ,royalty / and ,Saturn / the 'Is-
raelites) // Like 'Peter and his com'panions who
,followed Jesus / a'bandoning their 'parents and
,everything / when they 'heard Him in,vite them
in the words / 'Follow \me / while they were cast-
ing their 'nets to catch 'fish on the 'shores of the
sea of \Galilee (Mt 4:18–22) / or a,gain / like the
'farmer who 'sold ,all that he had / and bought the
,field / in which he \heard / a 'treasure lay \hidden
(Mt 13:44–45) //

The 'Psalmist has drawn to us the 'picture of a
,deer / that got into ,trouble / in its 'frantic 'search
for \water / As a 'deer 'longs for 'flowing ,streams /
'so my 'soul 'longs for \you / O ,God // (Ps 42:1) //
'Likewise our 'hearts as 'well 'thirst for the \Saviour

// He cried `out / Let `anyone who is `thirsty come to `me / and the one who be`lieves in me `drink // As the ,scripture has said / out of the be,lievers's heart / shall `flow rivers of `living water (Jn 7:37–38) // If we `do have the un`ceasing ,thirst for God / the `earnest `wish to make a ,search / and find Him ,out / we `too can `make it / and will be re,warded / as the `wisemen were // For `Lord the `Saviour Him,self said / `Search / and you will `find / for everyone who ,searches / `finds (Lk 11:9–10) //

`Where do we find out `God today // In the `first ,place / we `meet Him in the `Holy ,Mass / in the ,Bible / in the co'mmunity of be,lievers / in the `priests who are the repre`sentatives of God // If it `was in the ,manger / that the `wisemen from the `East found ,Jesus / to`day we `are to find Him in `people who suffer ,pain / the ,poor / and `those who work `hard for their ,livelihood / who re`flect the `face of God // A,long with them / we have `Him in the ,sinners / and `those who are ,ostracised / and dis`criminated against in the so`ciety // His Incar`nation was `not in search of the `righteous / but the `sinners (Mt 9:13) //

Let's `now re`flect on the re`sponse of the ,wise-men from the East / who found `out the ,saviour / as a re`sult of their `search // They knelt ,down / and paid Him `homage // Then `opening their

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,treasure chests / they 'offered Him gifts of ,gold /
,frankincense / and `myrrh //

A'ccording to one tra,dition / the 'names of
these ,wisemen were / ,Caspar / ,Melchior / and
Baltha'zar / and it is be,lieved / that they in their
,order / offerd ,gold / ,frankincense / and `myrrh
to Babe `Jesus // 'After the example of ,Caspar /
who offered ,gold / we are in'vited to a'dore ,God /
in terms of ,charity / that makes us 'share with
'others what we `have // Like ,Melchior / who
offered ,frankincense / we are 'called to adore
,God in hu,mility / by getting 'rid of our 'pride and
self im`portance // Like Baltha'zar who offered
,myrrh / which is con'sidered to be an e'ffective
and 'precious ,medicine / 'used to remove ,pain /
'each one us is 'constantly 'called to adore ,God /
by 'sharing our 'joy with ,others / and by 'con-
stantly trying to re,move pain / from the 'lives of
`others //

The 'offerings of the 'wisemen at the 'feet of
,Jesus / were 'also sym'bolic of the 'whole of `lives
// They ad'mitted ,Jesus / as their ,Saviour and the
'King of their `hearts // Their 'offertory re'flected
the 'whole 'spirit of the re,sponse / to the co'm-
mand of ,Christ the Lord / to 'love ,Lord your God
/ with 'all your ,heart / with 'all your ,soul / and
with 'all your `strength // The ,wisemen / 'after

their ,visit to Lord Jesus / 'left for their 'own ,coun-
 try / by a`nother road (Mt 2:12) // 'After offering
 their 'gifts at the ,feet of Jesus / they 'trusted in
 'God ,fully / for what'ever they `needed // Such
 'people are the 'poor in `spirit // They are `blessed
 / for 'theirs is the kingdom of `heaven (Mt 5:3) //

Mt 4:1–11



Then 'Jesus was led 'up by the 'Spirit into the ,wil-
derness / to be 'tempted by the `devil // (v. 1)



On the o'ccasion of 'Jesus' 'baptism at the ,Jordan / it was 'solemnly re'vealed and o'fficially de'clared from the ,Heavens / that ,Jesus / hailing from 'Nazareth was the 'Son of `God // Soon ,after / 'Jesus the Son of 'God was led 'up by the 'Spirit into the 'wilderness of Ju,dea / where 'John the 'Baptist his fore`runner / had pro'claimed the 'arrival of ,Christ / the Re'deemer of `mankind // In to'day's gospel ,passage / 'Mathew the e'vangelist na,rrates to us / the temp'tations from the 'devil Jesus 'had to 'face over that `place //

'Jesus 'spends 'forty ,days in the desert / as days of temp'tation // The his'torical e'vent of the Old 'Testament ,people / 'journeying through the ,desert / to 'reach the desti'nation of the 'promised ,land / facing temp'tations and ,failures / was a 'warning to the Re'deemer of the `world // But 'Jesus the Re,deemer of the world / wins com'plete 'victory over the temp'tations he goes `through // 'This makes it ,clear / that the sal'vific 'mission of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the Me'ssiah is one that over'comes the 'world and the 'devil // 'Here we 'see the New 'Testament 'people getting 'victory over temp'tations / whereas the Old 'Testament people 'miserably 'failed in the context //

Through his 'fasting for 'forty 'days in the ,desert / Jesus could 'personally ex'perience the in-'tensity of 'physical 'hunger and 'thirst // It was 'when he was going 'through 'hunger at its 'real ,peak / the 'devil a'pproached Jesus with his 'first temp,tation / If 'you are the 'son of ,God // What we 'see here is the 'faulty 'method re'sorted to by the 'devil // The 'devil who 'knows the 'truth that 'Jesus is ,God / de'grades it to the level of a 'doubt through this / Command these 'stones to become 'loaves of 'bread // The 'devil here 'tempts Jesus to 'use his di'vine ,power / to a'chieve a 'selfish 'goal // Here we can 'see the devil's temp,tation / that 'Jesus the Me'ssiah should 'use his 'gifts and ,powers / for his 'own selfish 'purposes //

To con'front the 'devil with the 'first of his temp,tations / Jesus 'quotes the book of Deute,ronomy / ch '8:3 // Jesus now gave 'out the ,teaching /that having ac'cepted the 'truth of his being the ,Son of God / one should make 'God a'lone as the 'life goal // The 'Lord made it ,clear / that 'bread is just a 'means / and 'not an 'end of ,life // There-

fore re'lationship with 'God and 'service to ,Him /
 should remain the 'mainstay of one's 'life on
 'earth //

After the 'first temp,tation / 'Jesus was 'placed
 on the 'pinnacle of the 'temple // The 'Roman
 'soldiers in those ,days / used to dis'play from the
 'temple peak the 'criminals in their ,custody / to
 the 'people dwelling 'down in Je'rusalem // The
 'devil re,minds the Lord / that 'he as 'well should
 make his a,ppearance / to the admi'ration of
 'people around // Then having placed 'Jesus on
 the temple ,peak / the 'devil makes the su,ggestion
 / that 'Jesus 'throw himself ,down / with the a's-
 sured su'pport of God's 'angels // The 'devil wants
 'Jesus to dis'play to the ,public / his extra'ordinary
 'strength and self-'confidence this ,way / and 'also
 to 'testify to ,others / that he is in po'ssession of
 divine 'powers // When 'Satan su,ggests / that 'Je-
 sus gain 'victory and a,chievements / with his 'own
 ,power / by going a'head with his 'own ,thoughts /
 Jesus 'shows to him the 'need and ne'cessity of
 moving a'long the 'path of God // 'Jesus thus
 ,teaches / that one should 'not go one's ,own way /
 but 'live by pur'suing 'God's way / o'beying His
 ,will / and in de'pendence in 'Him //

Not 'satisfied even with the 'second temp,tation
 / the 'devil 'ventures to 'lead Jesus to a 'third one //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

This time / he makes an a'pproach to ,Jesus / with a de'mand for po'litical `leadership //

The po'litical 'life of the ,Jews then / was 'really 'pitiable and `miserable // The 'Jews had al'most been 'crushed under the heavy 'burden of the tax ,system / im'posed by the im'perial 'rule of ,Rome / and the 'senseless 'cruelty in'flicted on them by the 'military re`gime // 'Naturally they 'dreamt of a 'mighty 'leader to e'merge from a ,mong them / to find a so'lution to 'all their `problems // In ,this context / what the 'Satan su'ggested seemed to be an 'antidote to the 'pressing 'problems pre`vailing then / If you fall 'down and `worship me // Here the 'Satan gives 'Jesus the instigation to form a ,mindset / that would 'justify any 'means as ac,ceptable / if it is taken for ful'filling the long-a'waited 'dreams and de'sires of the 'Israelite `people // Here the 'devil is 'flouting to his con-`venience the ,truth / that the 'goal a'chieved be-comes com,plete / 'only when the 'right 'means is re'sorted to for the `purpose //

Though libe'ration of 'Israel was a 'burning ,problem of the time / 'Jesus ,taught / that 'lasting so'lution for it was to be 'found through es'tablish-ment of 'solid re`lationship with God: 'Worship the 'Lord your `God / and 'serve 'only `Him // 'Never does Jesus 'advocate 'severing re'lationship

with ,God / for the 'sake of ma'terial 'gains or suc`cess //

Besides the temp'tations in the ,desert / 'Jesus / the ,Son of God / 'had to go 'through se'vere tem-p'tations in his 'public `life // But he could over'c-ome them ,all / only through the `power of God // This 'power he ob'tains through his 'contact with the 'God the 'Father in `prayer //

'We human 'beings as 'well are 'tempted by the ,devil / in the 'same 'areas as 'Jesus was in the `desert / for fin'ancial ,gain / for 'flaunting our'self as the 'first and the ,greatest / for po'litical 'power and se'curity here on `earth // Through fi'nancial ,gain / we ,know / 'man 'satiates the 'hunger and 'thirst of the 'body a`lone // But 'he being a ,creature / with 'God's 'image wi,thin / 'won't be 'satisfied with `bread a,lone // He is in 'dire 'need of the 'food for ,soul / which is pro'vided by the `Word of God // 'Man finds con'tentment in ,full / 'only by 'relishing that ,Word / and by ,living his life / a`ccording to the Word // Re'memeber what St Au,gustine said / after learning a 'lesson from his own ex`perience / O ,God / you cre'ated me for `you / in 'you 'alone will I 'find my ful`filment // The 'feeling of self-im,portance / or the 'owner-ship of ,kingdoms / 'can't render 'man 'ultimate 'peace and con`tentment //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

So as we 'enter upon the 'Lenten ,season / the
ex'ample that 'Jesus gives us to 'follow is that of
'prayer and `fasting / When we 'follow his example
in 'vigilance and ,earnestness // not 'only do we
over'come 'worldly temp,tations / but 'sharpen
and intensify our 'loving re'lationship with 'God
and His ,children / in Jesus `Christ //

Mt 4:12–17



Re`pent / for the 'kingdom of 'heaven has come
`near // (v. 17)



According to ,Mathew's gospel / 'Jesus be'g-
ins His public 'ministry in `Galilee //
Though a 'native of ,Nazarath / Jesus 'left
that place with 'good `reason / the 'men of ,that
city / 'drove him 'out of the `town (Lk 4:29) // 'so
He 'came and made his 'home in Ca,pernaum (v.
13) / a `city of Galilee // It should 'seem / that
'people of Ca'pernaum bid Him `welcome // Ca'p-
ernaum is said to be on the 'sea of Ti`berias / and
'people of the place are 'glad of the a'rriual of Je-
sus from ,Nazareth / where He had been bred `up
// It may be re,membered / that 'Mathew himself
had his 'residence in `Galilee / but he 'sees the a'r-
rival of Jesus in Ca,pernaum / as 'part of the ful'fil-
ment of I'saiah's ,prophecy (Isa 9:1–3) / which
speaks of the re'turn of the 'light of 'liberty and
pro,sperity / to 'people in the 'coastal 'areas of 'Ze-
bulun amd ,Napthali / whose 'lives were 'darkened
by `sorrow // The ,prophecy says / they would find
,light / ,life / and `hope // And in a'nother ,passage
/ the 'same prophet ,prophecies / that 'One would

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,come / who would be their 'comfort in their `sor-row (Isa 61:1-3) // In ful'filment of ,these proph-ecies / ,Mathew says / 'ministry of Jesus be'gan among the 'sorrowing 'followers of 'John the Baptist in Ca,pernaum / on 'hearing that 'John had been a'rrested / and 'claims that 'Jesus is the ,One / the Me'ssiah //

The 'main 'theme of the procla'mation of 'John the ,Baptist / as the fore'runner of the Me,ssiah was / Re`pent / for the 'kingdom of 'heaven has come `near (Mt 3:2) // Now that 'John's 'ministry of pre'paring the 'way of the 'Lord came to an 'end with his a,rrest / Jesus be'gins where 'John left `off / 'saying ,like John / Re`pent / for the 'kingdom of 'heaven has come `near (Mt 4:17) //

Thus 'Christ put a great re'spect upon 'John's ,ministry / and 'did confirm the 'word of his `mes-senger // But 'Christ preached re'pentance as `gos-pel / 'words from His 'lips / 'dropped as ,honey combs / 'sweet and `gracious / un'like those of the ,Baptist / who was 'looked upon as a ,melancholy / mo`rose man // The 'reason however for 'preach-ing by 'John and 'Jesus is the `same / The 'king-dom of 'heaven is at `hand // A,gain / now with ,Je-sus preaching / the kingdom of 'heaven was so much ,nearer / the 'argument so much the

'stronger / as St ,Paul says / 'now is the sal'vation
'nearer (Rom 13:11) //

In ,John's preaching / it is the ,law / that sets
'God's 'mercy between His 'people and His 'judge-
ment / whereas in ,Jesus' / it is 'God's ,love / that
sets God's 'mercy between His 'people and His
'judgement // For as 'John the e,vangelist says /
'God did 'not send the 'Son (Jesus the Messiah)
into the ,world / to con'demn the ,world / but in
'order that the 'world might be 'saved through
'Him (Jn 3:17) //

In the 'New Testament dispen,sation/ sal'vation
de'pends on one's having 'active 'trust in the
,mercy of God / as re'vealed in the 'life and self-
'sacrifice of Jesus 'Christ // In the 'Old Testament
dispen,sation / sal'vation was con'sidered to be a
,surety / and wi'thin the ,reach of man / through
o'bedience to the 'law // But sal'vation preached
by 'Jesus is a possi,bility / through re'pentance and
God's ,mercy / by be'lieving in the 'only Son of
,God / and o'be'ying His co'mmandments of 'love
// Therefore 'people should not 'see Jesus as pri'm-
arily a ,judge / con'demning them all by the re'al-
ity of His per'fection // At the ,same time / the
'wrath of God is 'not to be dis'missed with sort of
'casual ,optimism like / He is a 'good ,fellow/ and
it'll 'all be 'well // One should bear 'fruit worthy

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

of re'pentance // 'Every 'tree that does 'not bear /
good ,fruit / is cut 'down and 'thrown into the `fire
(Mt 3:10) //

The 'story of ,Jesus / as we all `know / is the
,story of ,love / 'freely 'offered even to the 'ul-
timate 'price of di'vine `suffering // So the 'im-
petus to our re'pentance should 'come from ,sor-
row / for having o'ffended against the ,One / who
'loves us enough to `save us / 'not from 'fear of
`judgement / al'though there will 'always be
,judgement / that the 'light has come into the
`world / and people loved ,darkness rather than
light / because their 'deeds were `evil (Jn 3:19) //

`Prayer

*O ,Christ Jesus / we ,pray / that you re'new us with your
life-'giving ,Spirit / and open our 'eyes to see ,you / as
the 'Lord of sal,vation / and 'not of condem`nation //*
*May we 'never remain com,placent sitting in the ,dark-
ness of sin / 'blinded to seeing the 'great 'light that you
`are //* 'Grant that we be 'led to re,pentance / 'not out of
having 'broken a ,law / but out 'sorrow for having ,hurt
you / who 'loved us with your 'infinite 'love of ,suffering
/ and 'dying on the 'cross for our sal'vation // May your
'reign of 'love be 'present in our re'pentant ,hearts/ so as
to bear 'fruit worthy of re`pentance // A`men //

Mt 5:48



Be 'perfect therefore / as your heavenly 'Father is
perfect // (Mt 5:48)



When 'God created the ,human race /
they were made to be 'perfect 'images
of 'God Himself // ,God being perfect
/ human 'beings made in ,His image / were 'also
perfect // A'gain we read in ,Genesis / that God
Him,self saw / that 'all that He had cre'ated was
very ,good / and in per'fection // But following
the ,fall / we all v'know / man fell from the 'height
of his per,fection / with which 'God has cre'ated
him //

But 'God being 'constant in His 'love and
,mercy / still 'calls us to 'share in His ,holiness /
which is His per'fection through His 'only 'Son Je-
sus 'Christ // We 'Christians acknowledge ,Jesus
Christ / as 'perfect 'God and 'perfect 'Man // Our
vo,cation from God is / to ,share in His holiness /
,through His Son / who has made us His ,own / by
'living and 'dying for us on the 'cross // And after
His Resurr,ection / the Holy 'Spirit has been 'sent
to us to en,lighten us / 'lead us to God's per,fection
/ His 'holiness // For 'us therefore to become ,per-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

fect / in reflection of the 'heavenly ,Father's perfection / we 'have to so follow the hu,manity of Jesus / in terms of His creative and for,giving love / during His 'life on ,earth / and 'death on the `cross
//

The 'call to reach heavenly 'Father's per'fection and ,holiness / would be a `frightening ,thought / if we 'didn't have wi'thin us the 'grace of our Lord ,Jesus Christ / and the co'mmunion of the Holy `Spirit // But 'now that there is the possi'bility of a,ttaining it / through the 'grace of Jesus ,Christ / and the 'guidance of the Holy ,Spirit / it poses a ,challenge for us / to pur'sue the path of per'fection and `holiness // We can 'seek no ,less than perfection / not taking re'fuge in ex,cuses by saying / well / `no one is ,perfect // `True / there has been 'no human 'life on ,earth / except 'Jesus and His ,mother / who have been 'free from `sin // But thanks to 'them and their medi,ation / we must not de'spair at our 'failures and `shortcomings / and 'think that it is 'not worth `trying // `No / we must 'not be 'satisfied with imper`fection // To 'make ourselves 'fit for the 'name ,Christians that we bear / we should ever strive for per'fection and ,holiness / by doing 'business with the 'talents we have been given by `God / i'rrespective of their `number or size // So keeping the 'word of Jesus in

our ,mind / Be `perfect therefore / as your heav-
enly `Father is 'perfect / 'lets's all be re'solved to
make a de'cision and co'mmitment to become
'perfect and ,holy / after the 'perfect 'image of
God the 'Father `in us // May the A'postle's 'words
as well en`courage us to the purpose / I can 'do all
,things / through 'him who `strengthens me (Phil
4: 13) //

Mt 7:21–27



Not 'everyone who says to me ,Lord / ,Lord / will
'enter the kingdom of 'heaven / but 'only the one
who does the 'will of my 'father in heaven // (v. 21)



To'day's gospel 'passage for our re,flection
and meditation / carries the con'clusion
of the 'long and 'excellent 'sermon on the
,Mount / the 'scope of which is to 'show the indis-
'pensable ne'cessity of o'bedience to the
co'mmands of Christ // Jesus 'warns us about a
'frequent and 'dangerous dis,tortion / re'ducing
'faith to 'knowledge and re'ligious 'practices //
In,stead / we have to 'listen with our ,hearts / and
'live a'ccording to 'God's will //

'Entering the kingdom of ,heaven / is the 'fre-
quently used ex'pression in the Mathew's ,gospel /
to mean sal'vation / whereas in 'Paul's 'letter to the
,Romans / the e'quivalent ex,pression is / the
'righteousness of God / and in to'day's gospel 'pas-
sage Jesus ,tells us / that sal'vation con'sists in do-
ing the 'will of my 'Father in heaven // In 'Jesus'
,time / as in our 'own as ,well / 'faith in 'God is of-
ten re'duced to a 'strictly re'ligious 'sphere /
'seperated from the 'tasks and responsi'bilities of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'daily \life / con'fining it to the world of dev\otions
/ or of the extra'ordinary and mi'raculous
phe'nomena // How,ever / 'Jesus 'strongly re'jects
such ex'pressions of 'faith as \works of salvation //
Then 'I will de,clare to them / I \never know you /
go a\way from me / you \evildoers (Mt 7:23) // In
'other ,words / these 'actions in the ,name of God /
may not coin'cide with God's \will // 'God's will
'always involves being 'agents of eq'uality and
\justice // In the 'previous 'chapter of Mathew's
,gospel / we 'hear the Lord re,minding us / that we
strive 'first for the kingdom of 'God and his \right-
eousness (Mt // 6:33) // E'stablishing 'right and
,justice / is the ex'pression used by 'prophets in
the ,Bible / to 'designate the ,conduct / 'God ex-
'pects of be\lievers // It maybe ,noted / that
'Mathew himself in his well-'known 'text on the 'fi-
nal ,judgement / i'dentifies the funda'mental cri'-
terion for ,entry into the kingdom / with 'concrete
works of 'Love for the \needy //

'Not taking 'this evan'gelical cri'terion into
a,ccount / is 'building on ,sand / without foun'da-
tion // The Lord invites us / to build our 'lives on
\rock (v. 24) / and the 'rock is 'God's \will / his
\kingdom / of ,life / ,justice / and \peace //

When we 'knowingly dis'o'bey God's ,will / we
bring u'pon ourselves di'sastrous \consequences //

We may well re'member what 'happened to the kingdom of 'Judah in O'T 'times // It was a re'ligious 'kingdom / that is the 'king was 'not merely a po'litical figure / but the repre'sentative of 'God // However the 'spiritual foun'dation of the kingdom was 'lost / for its 'king and his 'people lived ,lives / as 'if there were 'no 'statutes given by 'God // The re'sult was that 'Judah 'fell under the Baby'lonians (2 Kings 24:16) // 'There comes therefore the ful'filment of the Lord's ,saying / Not 'everyone who says to me ,Lord / ,Lord / shall 'enter the kingdom of 'heaven / but he we who does the 'will of my Father //

To 'be a ,Christian / and to 'own a Christian ,culture implies / a great 'deal more than 'wearing in'sigmia of re'ligion / like ,rosary / and ,scapular / and the like saying 'prayers in ,schools / 'scripting re'ligious ,mottoes / singing out 'hymns at in-augu'rations and 'prayerful invo'cations at 'public ,dinner / and a'ttending convention re'treats // It 'means doing 'God's will // It is 'also the a'ware-ness that we are 'living ,in God / in 'God's ,action / as a 'fish in 'water // 'Every ,moment therefore / is the 'message of 'God's will // 'Every ex'ternal e,vent / and even 'thoughts and 'feelings wi,thin us / is 'God's own 'touch // Therefore 'Jesus 'calls us to do God's ,will / what'ever it 'might ,be / and

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'warns us against lip`service to God // 'Building the house of re'ligion on any 'other foun,dation / is like 'building a house on `sand (Mt 7:26) // 'God is 'not one to be 'used as a `stopgap // His 'will must be found at the `centre of life / not 'only in `health and ,vigour / but 'also in 'sickness and `weakness / not 'only in `pleasures and ,joys / but 'also in 'pains and `sorrows / not 'only in ,life / but 'also in 'death we 'have to embrace his `will //

Mt 8:5–13



,Lord / I am not 'worthy to have 'you under my
'roof / but 'only `speak the ,word / and my servant
will be `healed // (v. 8)



A Cen'turion was a 'Roman ,officer / in-
'charge of a 'hundred `soldiers // At 'Jesus'
time / 'Palestine had been under 'Roman
con,trol / about a 'hundred `years // 'Roman ,of-
ficers / all `too ,generally / were 'brutal and
de`spsied men // But ,some of them / thanks to
the 'influence of 'jewish re'ligion were `good men
// It may here be re`membered / that the 'first
'Gentile to be re'ceived into the 'Church was a
Cen,turion / named Cor`nelius / as re'corded in
'Acts `10 //

In the Cen'turion 'episode na'rrated in to'days
gospel ,passage / what is 'spotlighted is the ,faith
of the Centurion / arising from his 'notion of
'power and `worthiness // He 'knew what could be
a'complished through the 'exercise of `power //
He 'knew what it was like to co'mmand 'soldiers
and ,slaves / and 'have it `happen // It is in ,this
way / no `doubt / that the 'synagogue in Ca'per-
naum was `built // This cen'turion 'brokered the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

acqui'sition of im'perial re,sources / to pro'vide a
'local a'menity / and as a re,sult / was 'recognized
as a 'patron by the 'townsfolk // That he is 'so
'honoured is 'seen in his co'mmanding the 'jewish
,elders / to so'licit 'help from 'Jesus / and they 'do
// These ,elders / in a'ppealing to Jesus for ,help /
make 'much of the Cen'turion being 'worthy of Je-
sus' a'ttention / but the Cen,turion himself / has a
'different pers'pective // While 'he may be a 'pat-
ron to the ,town / he is not 'Jesus' ,patron //
In,stead / he ack'nowledges 'Jesus as his su'perior /
as the 'One with 'greater 'honour and 'power // Je-
sus 'recognizes the 'great 'faith placed in ,him /
and so 'heals the man's 'slave //

The 'faith of the Centurion is un,limited /
without con'ditions // ,Lord / I am not 'worthy to
have 'you under my 'roof / but 'only 'speak the
,word / and my servant will be 'healed // He
be'lieved that 'Jesus could 'cure at a ,distance /
without 'visit or personal 'contact // 'This is the
big 'point of the 'story // It 'shows that he
be'lieved Jesus to have di'vine 'power over 'all
'nature //

The Gospel 'says that Jesus was a'mazed at the
Cen'turion's 'faith // He 'used it as the o'ccasion to
'teach the 'crowd // ,First He says / this is 'more
'faith than he has found among the ,Jews / the

`chosen of God // But un`less the chosen `children of `Abraham start be,lieving / the `kingdom will be taken a,way from them / and `given to `such Gen-tiles as `this Centurion //

The `truth that is re`vealed through the Cen`turion en`counter with `Jesus is `this / the `holiness of `God may be ,felt / `even by `those who do not con`sider themselves re,ligious / in its `strict `sense // Wherever there is a de`sire for the ,good / and a `sense of in`adequacy of ,human effort / `Gods' power breaks `through // `Just be`longing to the ,church / is `no guaran`tee of our ,faith / of our `membership in the `kingdom // The `simple un`educated `new ,convert / can com`pletely put us to ,shame / with his uncon`ditional faith // The Cen`turion `knew what the `exercise of `power `meant / and he could `feel the `difference in the `power that is di`vine // Not `soldiers obeying ,orders / but ,sickness / an,xxiety / ,guilt / `fleeing be-fore the `Son of God // `Words `close to `these of the Cen`turion are often ,said / before re`ceiving Co,munion / in `Latin `liturgy / ,Lord / I am not `worthy to re`ceive you / but `only `say the ,word / and I'll be `healed // And we `know Christ ,hears them / and `comes to us //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Prayer

*,Lord / I am not 'worthy to re`ceive you / but 'only 'say
the ,word / and my 'soul will be `healed // I 'thank you
for the ,love / that re'sponds to the 'weakest ,will / that
'meets with un'measured 'care the 'slightest `need //*
*Lord ,Jesus / you 'bore my in,firmities / en'dured my
`suffereings // I 'trust in `you // 'Heal me of my 'weak
`faith // ,Lord / I will be 'bold to re`ceive you / because
you 'gave yourself for `me // A`men //*

Mt 9:13



'Go / and 'learn what this 'means / I de'sire 'mercy
/ not 'sacrifice // For I have come to 'call not the
,righteous / but 'sinners // (Mt 9:13)



In the gospel 'passage prescrib,ed for to'day's
re,flection / we find 'Jesus sharing a ,meal /
offered in ,honour of him / with a misce'l-
laneous assembly of ,guests / that com'prised the
un'twanted and unde'sirables in the so,ciety /
which the 'Pharisees present ob'jected to // Just
'previous to this 'passage in Mathew's ,gospel / we
have 'Jesus con'fronting the ,Scribes / who a'c-
cused Jesus of being a blas'phemous / because he
'dared to announce 'God's for'giveness of 'people
like the ,sick / the 'publicans or tax co,llectors /
and the ,gamblers / who a,ccording to the scribes /
were 'clearly 'sinners / and 'therefore deserving
'no for'giveness // In ,their judgement / these
'people could 'only gain 'God's for,giveness / by
ad'hering to the re'ligious ,system / over which
they pre'sided // They were 'angry / because 'Jesus
was by,passing them / and en'couraging ,people /
to re'late di'rectly to 'God as 'Father //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Now in the 'context of the 'meal arranged in Mathew's 'house in ,honour of Jesus / the 'host himself was in the ,eyes of the Pharisees / a 'public 'sinner / as he was a ,publican / be'fore Jesus' ,call to him / to 'join the group of his di'sciples / and ,therefore / they a'ccused Jesus of acting un,lawfully / or ina,ppropriately / despite his 'claim to being a 'teacher of the 'Law // They made their accu'sation not di'rectly to ,Jesus / but 'through his di'sciples // Unde'terred by their 'protest and accu,sation / Jesus re'sponded to his ,critics / by 'using the 'text Prophet Ho'sea applies to ,God / I de'sire 'mercy / not 'sacrifice (Hos 6:6) // He told the 'Pharisees to go and 'learn the 'meaning of ,this law they said / they res'pected //

'Welcoming ,sinners / the 'sick and the ,despicable / 'manifests the 'real univer'sality of the ,offer of salvation / which 'Jesus is bringing // God's 'love is 'concretely uni,versal / as made ,clear / in his par'tiality and 'preference for the 'marginalized in the so'ciety // This is 'why Jesus ,stated / I have come to 'call not the ,righteous / but 'sinners //

Jesus' 'teaching and 'way of life was a ,scandal / to so 'many of the religious 'people and 'leaders of his 'day / because he 'dared to 'preach and ,prac-

tise / an 'intimate re, lationship with the God /
whom he a, ddressed / as `Father //

Mt 9:37–38



The 'harvest is \plentiful / but the 'labourers are
'few / therefore 'ask the ,Lord of the harvest / to
send out \labourers into his harvest // (Mt 9:37, 38)



The ministry of Jesus in 'word and ,deed' /
is 'vividly por,trayed / in the 'first 'nine
chapters of Mathew's \gospel // It 'gives us
the im,pression / that it was re'markably suc'cess-
ful / but 'not as 'much as it was \needed // De'spite
all the 'good Jesus ,did for the people / by 'teach-
ing in their ,synagogues / and pro'claiming the
good 'news of the ,kingdom / 'curing every
di'sease and every ,sickn'ess (Mt 4:23) among them
/ there was 'still much \more to be done // The
'sight of the needy ,crowds / be'trayed and a'ban-
doned by their ,leaders / 'moved Jesus to com'pas-
sion // So he posed the 'challenge to his 'followers
to ,pray / that 'God will send co-,workers / for the
task of 'harvesting the 'blessings of the ,Kingdom
of God / for the 'benefit of the ,crowd / who were
'harassed and ,helpless / like 'sheep without a
'shepherd (v. 37) //

In re'sponse to the tragic 'sight of the ,suffering
crowds / Jesus 'called together his ,twelve disciples

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

/ and gave them au'thority to par'ticipate in his
'ministry of 'making people `whole //

The con'dition described in the ,gospel / is 'still
`true today // We 'don't have enough 'dedicated
,labourers / touched by the ,graces of God / to do
'Christ's work of ,teaching / ,preaching / 'healing
and 'caring for his 'little ones ,worldwide / num-
bering ,millions / who 'suffer an e,xistence / that is
'less than ,human / re'sulting from 'low standard
of ,living / ,starvation / ,tyranny / a,ggression and
,war / exploitation and co,rruption / in'dulged in
by the 'rich and 'powerful in so`ciety //

Jesus' 'remedy for 'all these ,problems / is 'still
`valid today / to 'ask the harvest ,master / to send
out ,labourers / to `gather his harvest // To,day /
when we 'celebrate the 'heavenly 'feast of St 'Vin-
cent de ,Paul / 'Patron saint of the 'poor and ,desti-
tutes / and 'Founder of 'Vincent de 'Paul So,ciety /
let's 'seek the 'heavenly inter'cession and 'help of
the saint for the `purpose / and be re'solved to
'truly ,share / in 'Christ's com'passion and 'mission
for the great ,crowds / left 'harassed and 'helpless
in the 'present ,world / like 'sheep without a `shep-
herd //

Mt 10:1–15



As you ,go / pro'claim the good ,news / The 'king-
dom of 'heaven has come `near // 'Cure the ,sick /
'raise the ,dead / 'cleanse the ,lepers / 'cast out
'demons // You re'ceived without ,payment / give
wi'thout payment // (vv. 7, 8)



Jesus / a'nointed as the Me'ssiah by the 'power
of the ,Spirit / gave 'out the 'content of the
'kingdom he came to pro,claim / after 'read-
ing the 'scripture text from I,saiah / in the 'syn-
agogue at `Nazareth // The 'different 'human
situ'ations like ,poverty / cap,tivity / ,blindness /
and o'ppression leading 'man to ,death / were
then taken 'up by the Messiah as His Messi'anic
,programme / to 'bring human 'history to libe'ra-
tion and 'fullness of `life // In the 'days that ,fol-
lowed / the 'pattern of God's 'mission in the 'min-
istry of Jesus was 'clearly e'stablished // The 'poor
hear the good ,news / the 'prisoners are ,liberated
/ the 'blind are ,healed / and the 'nearness of 'God
is pro`claimed //

Though the 'mission and 'ministry of Jesus in
'word and ,deed / was re'markably suc,cessful / as
por'trayed in the 'first 'nine 'chapters of Mathew's

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,Gospel / Jesus ,felt / that there was still 'more to be `done / when He 'saw the 'large and needy 'crowds ,thronging Him / as they were be'trayed and a'bandoned by their `leaders // The very ,sight of those crowds / who were 'harassed and 'helpless in their ,lives / like 'sheep without a ,shepherd / moved 'Jesus to com`passion //

In such a ,context / He 'chose His 'twelve di'sciples / and 'later seventy-'two ,more / to con'tinue the 'same mission as ,His / giving them au'thority to par'ticipate in His 'ministry of 'liberating ,people / from all 'forms of ,death / and 'thus harvest the 'blessings of the ,Kingdom of God / for the 'benefit of the poor `crowds //

The first 'twelve disciples were a 'motley collection of `men / un'likely and un'worthy ,candidates / by 'worldly `standards // But 'Jesus had 'great `faith in them / as He ,knew / that their 'lives had al'ready been 'touched by the `grace of God // So He en,trusted them / with the responsibility of ,sharing with others / the 'gift that they had re'ceived without `payment // So the di'sciples as 'well were to 'share the gift with 'others ,freely / wi'thout expecting 'anything in re,turn / ex'cept their 'bare ne`cessities //

We may ,think / what 'gift or 'gifts had 'Jesus' di'sciples received // The 'greatest gift they had re'-

ceived was 'faith in Jesus' ,message / the 'Kingdom of God has come `near / to'gether with au'thority over ,demons / 'power to 'heal the ,sick / to 'cleanse the ,lepers / to 'raise the `dead // These 'gifts they were to 'use for the ,good of others / wi'thout any ad'vantage to them`selves //

As 'part of ful'filling His 'mission e,ffectively / 'Jesus made it 'clear from the be,ginning / that the di'sciples were to be 'constantly on the ,move / and re'quired to travel `light // They were 'not to carry ,with them / 'anything that would ,slow them down / or 'cause them to 'trust in their 'own re`sources // They were 'called to ,trust God / for 'all their ,needs / and re'ly on the hospi'tality of ,people / who would re'ceive them as 'God's `mes-sengers //

A'gain Jesus ,told His disciples / be'fore sending them 'out to pro'claim His ,message / that they were to ex'pect re'jection and oppo'sition to their `mission // But 'this should 'not de,ter them / from going a'head with their `mission // in,stead / they should 'move to the ,next place / and con,tinue their work / leaving 'no ani'mosity or 'hatred for the 'house or ,town / that re'jected the message //

'Every 'Christian by vo,cation / is an a,postle (Gk = one who is sent out on mission) / or 'mis-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

sionary in some re'spects // We 'too are sent 'out to proclaim the good ,news / the 'Kingdom of 'Heaven has come ,near / by our 'words and 'deeds // We have 'also received various 'gifts of grace from the 'Lord / such as ,faith / ,hope / ,love / and 'probably some 'gifts of the 'Spirit // We all en'joy the gift of ,life / the 'energy of our 'bodies and our 'senses // All 'these we must be 'willing to 'share with ,others / at 'opportune ,times / without ex'pecting any re'turn / 'even by 'braving re'jection or oppo'sition from ,people / 'hostile to the good 'news //

A,gain / going 'by the ,Word of the Lord / we 'have to be a'ware of the 'need and ,duty / to 'share our gifts without ,trappings / wi'thout any big 'show // The 'true di'sciple of the Lord will 'always travel 'light // When the 'gifts are given ,out / with a 'lot of 'trappings or show-,off / it is 'hard to re'-ceive them in the 'right 'spirit / as it does not 'come from 'love for the Lord //

Mt 10:36



Even the 'hairs of your 'head are all 'counted //
(Mt 10:36)



There are a 'lot of 'people who be'lieve in
'chance // For ,them / sheer 'chance can
ex'plain e'vents in life // But we ,know /
their 'stand goes against 'reason // If 'their view
were to be ,true / 'human life should be
con,sidered / a 'plaything of i'rrational 'influences
// 'We however be'lieve and 'know from ex,peri-
ence / that e'vents taking 'place in our ,lives / are
'not under the con'trol of accidental ,causes / but
under the ,Providence of God / that draws the
'whole de,sign of human life / in view of 'better
'destiny // And 'that design may in'clude pers'ecu-
tion by ,enemies / re'jection of the 'near and ,dear
ones / and ab'surdities of ,life / leading the be'liev-
ers to de'spair and de'jection // But the 'Lord
a,s-sures them / that He Him'self is 'journeying
,with them / through the muck and mud of 'all the
,meaninglessness of life / moulding their ,lives /
through 'trials and tribulations //

'God's be'nevolent ,plan covers / every mi'nute
de'tail of our life // Even the 'hairs of your 'head

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

are all \counted // And 'that very well speaks of
'God's immense ,love / taking into a'ccount
'everything that con\cerns us // 'Even the so called
'chance people ,speak of / comes 'under the
pur'view of God's 'providence and be\nevolence //

Mt 11:25–30



'Come to me / 'all you that are ,weary / and are
'carrying heavy ,burdens / and I will give you `rest
// (Mt 11:28)



De'spite all the suc'cess in the 'ministry of
Jesus / done in terms of 'word and ,deed
/ by 'going about all the 'cities and ,vil-
lages / he 'still found it not e,nough / to meet the
'needs of ,crowds / that 'thronged to `see him //
The 'sight of the ,needy crowds / be'trayed and
a'bandoned by their ,leaders / like 'sheep without a
,shepherd / 'moved Jesus to com`passion // In re's-
ponse to the 'tragic sight of the ,suffering crowds /
Jesus 'called together his di'sciples / and gave
them au,thority / to par'ticipate in his 'ministry of
making people `whole / and their ministry of 'har-
vesting the 'blessings of the ,Kingdom of God / for
the 'benefit of the 'crowds proved to be suc`cessful
// Though the di'sciples chosen for the ,task / were
a 'motley co'lection of ,men / un'worthy candid-
ates by ,worldly standards / their 'lives had been
touched by the `grace of God / and in to'day's gos-
pel ,passage / (Mt 11:25–30) Jesus 'thanks his heav-
enly ,Father / for 'hiding the ,mysteries of the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Kingdom / from the 'educated and the in'telligent / in par,ticular / the 'Scribes and the ,Pharisees / and for re'vealing them to 'infants / ,namely his di'sciples // ,This Jesus says / is the 'work of the 'Father // The good 'news is not 'grasped by 'knowledge and 'reason // it is 'only known through reve'lation and 'faith // 'Not that the in'telligent and the 'educated in the Jewish co'mmunity were de'nied revel,ation // Jesus 'clearly proclaimed the ,good news / the reve'lation of His 'kingdom to 'all / and sub'stantiated it with 'miracles // But 'only the 'simple and the 'humble in the so'ciety had ac'cepted it / and received the 'insight given by the ,Father / thanks to their 'open and re'ceptive 'mind to the ,new law / the new 'covenant // Jesus 'told those ,people/ who re'sisted and re'sented against the good ,news he proclaimed / Unless you 'change and become like ,children / you will 'never enter the 'Kingdom of 'heaven (Mt 18:3) // A'gain He ,welcomed children / who were denied ac,cess to Him saying / 'Let the little 'children 'come to me / for it is to 'such as ,these / that the 'Kingdom of heaven be'longs (Mt 19:14) // The 'same kind of welcome Jesus a'ccorded to his ,other little ones / like the ,sick / ,publicans / 'sinners and the ,gentiles / who 'came to him in 'faith and re'pentance //

The 'next class of 'people that aroused 'Jesus' com,passion were those / whom he saw ,wearied / and carrying heavy `burden // Em'powered by his 'prayer of 'confidence ,in / and 'gratitude to the ,Father / Jesus ex'tends to 'these people as well lov-ing `welcome / and an invi'tation to ,get to him / 'promising them a 'healing touch and 'wholesome `rest // What 'vision of hu'manity might 'Jesus have ,had / when he promised 'freedom and ,rest / for the 'wearied and 'heavily burdened `people // He might have felt com,passion / to 'see in his ,days / all those 'wanderers in the ,wilderness / carrying all their be,longings with them / 'slaves working to 'build the ,monuments of kings / 'wo-men with their 'children fleeing from ,danger / 'la-bourers in the ,fields / 'womenfolk doing their 'hours long ,trek / to fetch `water and the like // He might 'also have had in his 'mind the ,rich / the suc,cessful / the 'powerful in the 'ranks of this ,world / with their 'burdens of 'stress and an,xiety / the fra'gility of ,status / the 'inward 'emptiness of ,loneliness / and 'other in,visible burdens / lying 'heavy on the 'shoulders of all ,people / 'passing through the 'pilgrimage of 'life on `earth // And then the 'heaviest of ,all burdens / ,sin / must have come to his `vision // ,This burden of sin / whether 'known and re,pented / un'realized or 'ar-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

rogantly ig,nored / might have caused 'injuries to the `souls of men // To 'all these classes of 'suffering 'people belonging to his ,period / as 'well as suc'ceeding ,ages / 'Jesus extends his com'passionate invi`tation / so that they 'get their 'pain and burden made ,less / by putting 'on his yoke of 'suffering ,love for them / instead of dragging 'all their 'workload all a,lone / under their `own strength // When they 'thus 'share with Jesus their ,pain and burden / of both 'body and ,mind / Jesus a,ssures them / they'll find a ,deep / ,sweet / 'peaceful ,rest / 'even in the midst of their 'arduous ,labours / to make their 'life 'joyful and `fruitful / bringing sal'vation not 'only to them,selves / but to the 'whole `mankind //

And 'this message of 'love and com'passion from ,Jesus / was pro'claimed by St 'Francis of A,ssisi / during his 'life on ,earth / and is being 'admirably followed ,up / and 'earnestly 'propagated by 'present Pope ,Francis / whose 'Patron's Day is 'celebrated to`day //

Mt 12:1–13



The Son of 'Man is 'Lord of the Sabbath // (v. 8)



O ur ,Lord / who was sub'jected to se'vere ,criticism / for vio'lation of some 'minor 'rules regarding 'Sabbath ob,servance / is giving clarifi'cation in the 'Gospel we just ,listened to / on the 'essence of a 'life of re,ligion / and the 'relevance of various re'ligious ob'servances //

So far as the ,Jews were concerned / 'Sabbath ob'servance carried 'great im,portance / among 'other religious `duties / and the 'Jewish re,ligion / in'sisted on 'strictly following the 'rules and regu,lations / pre'scribed for the observance of `Sabbath //

As 'Jesus was 'going through the ,grainfields / 'along with His di'sciples on one ,Sabbath day / we are `told / they felt `hungry / so they began to 'pluck heads of 'grain and to `eat / and 'this came to the 'notice of His `enemies / and they 'ques-tioned ,Jesus / on the 'lawfulness of 'this act of His disciples on the `Sabbath // But Jesus ,silenced His enemies / 'strongly de,fending His disciples / by 'quoting what 'David and his com'panions 'did once in the ,Temple / when they were `hungry /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

and e'stablished the ,point / that 'God 'always pre,fers / 'mercy to `sacrifice / and therefore His o'pponents should not con'demn the `guiltless //

A'gain while in the ,synagogue / they ,asked Jesus / whether it was 'lawful to `cure on the Sabbath // A 'man with a 'withered 'hand was there in the `synagogue // They were ,sure / 'Jesus would 'venture to `heal the man / de'spite the 'day being a `sabbath // ,Jesus / 'braving the oppo,sition of His enemies / 'asked the man to stretch 'out his ,hand / and gave him `healing / 'proving that it is 'always 'lawful to do 'good on the `sabbath / with the re,minder / that the Son of 'Man is the `Lord of the Sabbath //

Here 'Jesus is 'heavily coming 'down upon the 'attitude of ,Pharisees / for their accu'sations against Him'self and His di,sciples / as trans'gressors of the `law of Sabbath / by 'pointing out the contra'dictions and deviations in their `lives // He 'publicly ,stated / that the per'ception of the Pharisees was 'wrong and dis`torted / which made them 'see religious 'life and ex,perience / as the per'formance of e'laborate religious 'rituals and tra`ditions // He made it ,clear / that the ,essence of religion / is the re'lationship between 'God and ,man / and between 'man and `man / and that 'Sabbath ob,servance / and performance of 'other

religious 'duties and de,votions / are 'only in'tended for e'stablishing and 'fostering these re'lationships //

The Son of 'Man is the 'lord of the Sabbath (v. 8) // ,Here / the 'Lord Jesus is 'not ruling 'out Sabbath ob'servance / but de'claring that it is 'instituted by God // It was ,Yahweh / who ex'horting His chosen ,people / the 'Israelites / to ob'serve the ,Sabbath / that they would en'joy 'life and ,vigour / both 'bodily and 'spiritual // 'Stating that He has 'come to ful,fil the law / 'Jesus led his 'earthly ,life / ob'serving the 'Jewish religious 'laws and 'rules // But He 'publicly and fear'lessly ,taught / that when one has to 'break some minor 'rules of ,Sabbath observance / in view of 'meeting some of the 'basic ,needs of man / it is not at 'all a ne'gation or vio'lation of the 'rules of Sabbath ob'servance / and 'this He e,xemplified / by 'justifying the 'act of His di'sciples in the ,grainfield / and by 'curing the man with ,withered hand / on the day of 'Sabbath //

The 'message that ,Jesus gives us is / that 'along with singing out 'hymns in 'praise of ,Yahweh/ we should ful'fil the 'law of Sabbath ob,servance / by doing 'good to our 'brethren (fellow beings) // The 'real re,ligion / should 'always lead the 'way to 'service // Re'ligion will take 'men to their ,glory /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

when they prove to be 'people doing 'good to ,fel-
lowmen around / by e'stablishing re'lationship
with ,God / the 'source of all ,goodness / through
re'ligious ob'servances //

The 'same devi,ations / as 'characterizing the
'Pharisees and 'others in the 'Israelite co'mmunity
in Jesus ,times / are taking 'place these ,days / in
the ,new Israel / our 'christian co'mmunity // We
must ad,mit / that there are 'many be,lievers / who
try to ,please God / by en'gaging themselves in
'spiritual de'votions and ,exercises / that do 'not go
in 'tune with their 'personal \lives // So let's 'listen
to the exhor'tations of our ,Lord Jesus / to make
our 'lives 'spiritually a,live / being a'ware of the
'meaningless of a 'life of spiritu,ality / de'prived of
interi\ority //

'Work is \Worship

The con'ception that 'work it'self is ,worship /
has 'had much 'influence on the 'modern \youth //

'Those who have em'braced this ,concept / 'cannot
find any ,meaning / in re'ligious ob'servances or
de'votions // There is an indi'cation in the Lord's
,words / 'I am the \lord of the Sabbath / that 'this
per'ception is a dis'torted one // May the 'picture
of ,Jesus / who having re'ceived 'power from the
'heavenly ,Father / and 'then worked 'hard day and
'night for the ,welfare of people / 'ever remain

'fresh in our 'hearts // St Au,gustine / who de'spite
 having had 'many devi'ations in ,life / got con'ver-
 ted to 'faith in 'Jesus in all re,pentance / and then
 put the 'whole of him,self / in getting his 'life
 shaped into a ,beautiful one / by 'practising 'chris-
 tian 'virtues // His 'words in this 'context are
 'worth re'membering / 'one who ,prays ,well / lives
 well // Let's ,pray / that we be e'nabled to entertain
 a 'clear 'vision on what a 'life of re,ligion is / and
 'thus lead our ,christian life / in 'ferve'nt ,faith in
 the Lord / and in 'earnest 'service to our 'fellow
 human 'beings //

Mt 15:21–28



,Woman / 'great is your 'faith // Let it be 'done for
you as you 'wish // (Mt 15:28)



We 'don't know 'much about the 'wo-
man in the story in ,Mathew's gospel /
15:21–28 // Mathew 'simply i,dentifies
her / as a 'Canaanite woman // 'Racially and re,li-
giously / she be'longed to the tra'ditional 'enemies
of 'Israel // As 'far as 'Jewish society was
con,cerned / this 'woman was an out'sider //

At ,first / 'Jesus makes no re,sponse at all / to
this 'desperate ,mother / 'pleading for the 'life of
her 'daughter // He 'didn't say a 'thing // He
com'pletely i'gnored her // 'How come that he
'did so // 'Where's the com'passionate Jesus we
'hear so 'much about // E,ventually / when Jesus
,does respond / we hear 'words we probably 'didn't
ex'pect // He ,tells her / he 'can't do 'anything for
her / be'cause she is not 'Jewish // But the witty
'answer the 'woman gives su,ggests / that an under-
'standing was al'ready there between 'Jesus and the
'supplicant // 'That's the ,feeling we are given /
when she re'fuses to ac'cept Jesus' ,argument / that
she was not 'Jewish // She 'probably listened to

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the ,tone in Jesus' voice / while using the de'rogatory and in'sulting word 'dog's in his `utterance // We 'don't know 'how the word was `spoken / but 'she for 'sure ,knew / that there was a 'tone of 'testing ,irony / a 'gentleness in the ,voice / that ,challenged / but did 'not dis`miss the supplicant // And her intu'ition with 'Jesus' harsh ,utterance / proved to be co`rrect // Jesus ,knew / there was a 'treasure house of 'faith and hu,manity / in'side the 'great Canaanite ,woman / so that 'He could re,veal it to people / by `testing her // In re,ality / that's 'certainly what `happened // She re'fused to ac'cept Jesus' 'argument for re'serving the gift of ,healing / in favour of the ,children / the `Jews // She 'knelt down be,fore Jesus / con'tinuing to 'plead for him to `help her daughter // Her per'sistence e'ventually broke 'through Jesus' re'sistence or `test // Jesus 'praised her for her 'faithfulness to what she 'knew to be ,right and said / Let it be 'done for you as you `wish // And her daughter was `healed instantly / the 'mother winning the ,test by Jesus / through her ,faith / hu,mility / and perse,verance / to the 'sight of all 'people `present around //

'What better 'way could Jesus 'use to ,teach us / the 'qualities of 'faith than by holding ,out / the 'live e'xample of Canaanite `woman // The

'Canaanite woman of ,faith / is 'woman's `answer to the ,man of faith / the 'Roman `officer // This 'man as 'well Jesus held ,up to us / as an e'xample of great `faith / I have `not found 'such great 'faith in the 'house of `Israel //

As ,Christians / 'what may be that 'Jesus wants to ,teach us / by the e'xample of the Canaanite `woman // 'Not probably ,one thing / but `several /

1. 'Take it `gracefully / and 'not re,sentfully / if your 'prayer is not 'answered at `once //
2. 'Take it `grace fully / and not re,sentfully / when 'God puts you to the ,test / to bring 'out the `best in you
3. 'Stop ,threatening God / or making de'mands with your `prayer // Of 'course you can ,wrestle with God / as did 'Jacob in the ,Old Testament / or ,argue with Him / as did the 'Canaanite woman in the `gospel // A'gain following the e'xample of this ,woman / keep 'trusting in His ,love for you / 'trusting that 'God 'loves you ,fully / as 'much as He loves the ,people / who have their 'prayers `answered // It may 'just be that the Lord ,sees / that you 'need 'real 'growth in 'faith and ,courage / in 'patience and perse`ver-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

ance / and that you 'need ,these virtues /
more than 'other favours you `asked for //

Mt 16:13–19



On 'this ,rock / I will 'build my `church // (v. 18)



Peter's great con'fession made of ,Christ / as na'rrated by 'Mathew in to'day's Gos-pel ,passage / is 'also told in 'Mark ,8 / 2'7–2,9 / and 'Luke ,9 / 1'8–'20 //

'Many of us on 'reading these 'passages in sy,noptic gospels / 'tend to draw the con,clusion / that 'these passages are all about 'Jesus appointing ,Peter / the 'head of the A,postles / and the 'rock foundation of His `church But it may be borne in ,mind / that Peter's ,answer / 'you are the Me,ssiah / the 'Son of the living `God / to Jesus' ,question / who do `you say that I am / was in represen'tation of all the ,rest of the Apostles / they all con,senting to it / and con`curing in it/ But it was 'that char-acte'ristic out'going ,temper of Peter / that led him to be ,forward / in 'speaking upon all such o`ccas-sions / 'sometimes his speaking it ,right / ,some-times / `wrong // For e,xample / when Jesus 'tells Peter and the ,other disciples / about His 'immin-ent ,passion / 'death and resurr,ection / Peter i'm-mediately ,answers / that 'no such 'thing must `happen // He 'cannot accept a ,Christ / crowned

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

with 'thorns and 'dying on a `cross // 'He and his fellow-'followers of Jesus felt ,comfortable / with a 'gold-crowned ,Christ / in the tra'dition of a 'conquering ,emperor / or po'litical `leader //

De'spite all the 'weaknesses and 'shortcomings Peter ,had / Jesus 'always had 'love and a `preference for Peter // For Jesus ,knew / 'Peter had been 'touched by the ,grace of God / and that he would re'spond to it he,roically / towards the `end of the story // After all 'Jesus does not 'see with our ,limited / 'narrow `vision / for He 'knows the 'hidden gifts of a ,person / that 'can be drawn into His `service // Where a 'human employer or 'trainer would have given ,up / 'Jesus 'patiently worked 'on this ,man / un'til he was made `new //

Going by the 'records of ,Peter / in his 'growth in the di'scipleship of the Lord / we may re,call / that it had been some 'three ,years / since he had 'first ac'cepted Jesus as the Me`s'siah (Jn 1:41 / 42) // A ,year later / he 'called Jesus `Lord (Lk 5:8) // 'Half a year ,later / he called 'Him The 'Holy one of `God (Jn 6:68 / 69) // Now after 'two and a 'half years of associ,ation with Jesus / it is 'he who 'first 'openly ack,nnowledged / the 'Deity and Di`vinity of Jesus //

'Even here,after / we will ,find Peter / 'still sometimes ,hesitant / 'changing his o'pinions ac-

according to his `company / but `basically he would remain the `solid ,rock / which is the `meaning of his `name //

But it may be ,noted / that the word `rock used in `verse 1,8 / and which `Christ says he would `build his church ,on / is not `Peter / but the ,Truth / to which `Peter con,fessed / that `Jesus is the `Son of the living `God // The Di`vinity of Jesus is the foun,dation / on which the `church `rests / the funda`mental `creed of `Christendom // When read ,literally / the `Greek version of verse 1'8 runs like `this / Thou art `Petros / and upon `this ,petra / I will `build my `church // The word `petros means a `small `stone // It is a'pplied to `sling-stones / and even ,boundary-stones / in some `other contexts // Both `sling-stones and ,boundary-stones / are `not too `big for one `man to `lift and `move // But the word `petra is found a'pplied to Mt O,lympus / and the `Caucasus // A`gain when we look `into the use of ,and / in the ,verse/ it often ,means / `but / (eg Be `angry / and `sin not) / the `meaning of the verse is `clear // The ,Lord says / you are `Peter / and `any man can `move you / but the `Truth or `Faith you have ex'p-ressed in my ,Deity / is a ,rock / i'mmovable as the `mountains // On `it I will `build `my church //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

The words 'keys and 'kingdom used in 'verse 1,9 / 'need some expla'nation // The 'ordinary in-terpre'tation of ,keys is / that 'Peter opened the ,door of salvation / on the 'day of 'Pentecost to the 'Jews (Acts 2) / and 'later to the `Gentiles (Acts 10) // It does ,not mean / that Peter was given the 'power to forgive `sins / but to pro'claim the `terms of forgiveness // Whatever au'thority it gave to ,Peter / was 'also given to the `other Apostles (Mt 18:18; Jn 20:23) // And 'that authority was 'given in a 'Declarative `sense // It is 'always `Christ who forgives // His A'postles were in'spired by the Holy ,Spirit / to pro'claim the terms of `that forgiveness //

'Next is the concept of `kingdom used in the verse // The word ,Kingdom / as 'used in the New ,Testament / is `pliable / carrying 'various ,mean-ings / such as the 'reign of 'God in the indi,vidual / the 'general reign of 'righteousness among ,men / the ,church / ,Christendom / the mi'llennial ,reign / and `heaven // In ,Jesus' times / what the 'Jewish people had 'uppermost in their ,minds / was a po'litical kingdom / and their 'minds were on po'l-itical inde'pendence from ,foreign rule / under their Me,ssiah / whom they were ex'pecting // But the 'Kingdom that ,Jesus came to found / was 'not a po'litical ,kingdom / but to 'reign in the ,hearts

of men / and ,through their hearts / con'trol and trans'form their `lives // The 'human heart is the ,realm / in which 'Jesus came to `reign // 'This is to make all 'mankind 'Love `Him / so as to 'change us over into His 'own `image / and 'thus make us all 'sons and 'daughters of ,God / on whose ,rock of ,faith / He would 'build His `Church // If we are 'open to the ,Son of God / just as ,Peter was / de'spite all our 'weaknesses and ,failures / 'God will re'veal the 'mysteries of the `Kingdom to us / and 'mould us into the 'images of His ,Son / so as to be'come His A,postles / sent 'out to pro'claim God's ,Kingdom / in 'word and `deed //

Therefore the 'pertinent ,question / that is put to each 'one of us by the ,Lord Jesus / in the 'context of to'day's gospel ,passage / is the 'same as the 'one put to His A,postles / who do `you say that I am // Jesus 'really wants to `know / because if 'we have not made 'up our minds about 'Him by `now / there is ,danger / that our 'Christian 'Faith has ,little / or 'no foun`dation / and ,therefore / He can't 'build His 'church on the `rock of our faith //

Have we 'ever really 'tried to re'flect on the ,question / 'who is 'Jesus to `me // If we have ,not done so / there is 'no time like the 'present to `start //

Mt 17:19–20



'Why could `we not cast it out // He said to them
Be'cause of your 'little `faith // (Mt 17:19, 20)



Jesus was on a high `mountain // He had
'taken with him ,Peter / ,James / and `John
over there // And then be'fore them he was
trans'figured / and they 'saw him in shining
'splendour // As they were coming ,down / in the
company of ,Jesus / he pre'dicted he would 'suffer
at the hands of his ,enemies / to meet an 'igno-
minious `end // And we are told in the ,gospel /
that the disciples 'failed to under'stand his
pre'diction //

When they come 'down to the ,crowd below /
there came a ,man to Jesus / with the 'humble
re'quest for Jesus' inter,vention / in 'curing his ,son
/ caught with `epilepsy // He a'ddressed Jesus as
,Lord / and ex,plained to him / that he had
'brought the son to the di,sciples for the purpose /
but in `vain // When ,asked by the disciples / why
'they could not cast out the di,sease / or ,demon in
the boy / Jesus 'told them that it was be'cause of
their 'little `faith // Though fru'strated with his
di'sciples for their 'lack of ,faith // Jesus did 'not

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

a`bandon them // It is a 'miracle of ,grace / that 'Jesus did 'not abandon the di'sciples / though they were 'witnesses to his transfigu,ration / and the very 'many 'miracles Jesus ,did / to 'liberate people from their di'seases and o'ppressive ,forces / described in the 'gospel as ,demons / or evil `spirits // What 'Jesus meant by ,saying / Be'cause of your 'little `faith / was that a ,greater faith / that the di'sciples ,needed / would 'help them deal with the ,powers / which des'troy people as a `whole / ,physically / ,mentally / and `spiritually //

The greater ,faith / the di'sciples should have been led ,by / in their 'healing ,ministry / was that it was by 'God's 'power they were `healing / in fact/ they be'gan by 'letting God work `through them / and there'by their 'ministry of 'healing proved to be 'very e'ffective and suc,cessful / going by their 'own re,ports / 'joyfully given to 'Jesus their ,Mas-ter / on their re'turn after the healing ,mission / as re'corded in Luke's ,gospel / ch ,10: /17-`20 ,Lord / in your ,name / even the `demons submit to us // But then the 'Lord had ,warned them saying / Do 'not rejoice at this that the `Spirits submit to you / but re'joice that your 'names are written in `heaven //

The di'sciples however / 'gradually 'let their 'healings go to their `heads // They 'probably

'pulled the plug on \God / to the e'ffect that 'driving out 'devils and evil ,forces / went beyond their capacity and con'trol // In ,other words / their 'little ,faith / or 'lack of 'faith came in the 'way of suc,cess / in their 'healing \mission //

What 'faith ,really means is / keeping \plugged into God / 'seeing the re,ality / that 'God is 'always in co\mmand // Our 'work and 'mission is 'worth and e,ffective / 'only when we 'let 'God \be God // And 'that's ,faith / 'that's the 'power that works \wonders //

Mt 18:11–14



I ,tell you / in ,heaven / their 'angels con'tinually
see the 'face of my `Father in heaven // (Mt 18:11)



In one 'story we are told of an 'atheist in ,Rus-
sia / who in his 'study hung a ,board / with
'these 'words written in 'big block ,letters /
'GOD IS `NOWHERE / to re'mind him con,tinu-
ally / that he was a `hard-core atheist // His 'only
little ,child / 'slowly learning to 'write and ,utter
words / 'found the word ,NOWHERE / too 'big for
him to `spell // so he 'split the word into `two /
,NOW / `HERE / to make the 'whole thing 'pleas-
ant and 'comfortable to ,read / 'GOD IS 'NOW
`HERE // The atheist 'father happened to 'hear his
doted 'child say `this / 'GOD IS NOW `HERE / to
the e'ffect that a 'sudden transfor'mation took
,place in him / and he became an 'ardent be'liever
//

To,day / when we 'specially re'member and
'celebrate the feast of 'Guardian 'Angels in the
,liturgy / the gospel 'passage prescribed for our
'reading and re,flection / is the 'parable of the
'Lost `Sheep // What the 'Lord our 'Saviour
'teaches us through ,this parable is / that 'God who

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

is ,Jesus' Father / and 'our Father in 'heaven
,through Jesus / is on 'constant 'watch and ,care on
His little ones / 'through their Guardian 'Angels in
'heaven // So we are 'asked not to de'spise anyone
of the ,little ones / be'longing to His ,people / in-
'cluding the 'meanest // The ,reason is / it is not
the 'will of God the ,Father / the 'Great and 'Good
,Shepherd in heaven / that even 'one of His 'sheep
should go a'stray and be 'lost //

'We probably tend to 'take the word ,little ones
/ 'literally or chrono'logically / to 'mean 'small
'children // Of 'course our 'Lord has made it
'known to us in the ,gospels / that small 'children
are 'closer to his 'heart and to 'heaven / because of
their 'innocence and 'openness // But when taken
'figuratively or ,Spiritually / the ,word / ,little ones
means / 'every 'one of us / in the 'sense that we are
'people who go a'stray or 'sin // 'Still when we
re,pent of our sins / we prove to be ,His little ones
/ 'tenderly taken 'care of by the 'Father in heaven /
who re'joices along with His ,angles / over the
re'turn of His 'people to Him in re'pentance //

So God the 'Father is not 'One who is
'NOWHERE in the world / but 'One who is 'very
much ,NOW / ,HERE / and 'everywhere with ,us /
His ,little ones / as He 'was with the A'postles (Acts
5:19) and the 'Churches in ,general / (Rev 1:20; 2:8

/ 12 / 18; 3:1 /7 /14) / and with 'Peter (Acts 12:7 /8 /9 /15) and 'Paul (Acts 9:25; 27:23) in par,ticular / 'through their `angels //

Mt 18:21–35



Should 'you not have had 'mercy on your 'fellow
slave / as 'I had mercy on 'you // (v. 33)



The 'truth that 'God is ,love / is 'also true of
His 'mercy / 'God is ,mercy / 'merciful //
He will for,give / even the 'greatest 'sin we
might have fallen into // How,ever / our for,give-
ness from God / de'pends on 'our forgiveness of
our 'neighbour // In ,other words / we are to 'ask
God to for,give us / 'only in so far as 'we forgive
our fellow 'human beings // It 'doesn't 'matter
,how / or how se'verely they have 'offended us /
our for'giveness from God de,pends on / whether
'we forgive 'any offence by others a,gainst us / any
'number of times / not 'seven times in one's ,life /
as 'Peter probably ,meant it / or 7,7 times / or as
many as 4,90 times / as some 'readers tend to in-
'terpret Jesus' re'ply to Peter's ,question / found in
the gospel 'passage // If there is 'no ,limit / to
God's for,giveness of us / there can be 'no ,limit /
to 'our forgiveness of one a'nother / whether it be
in the ,family / co,munity / at ,work / and in 'all
our associ'ations // And 'this is the 'message

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

today's gospel 'passage from ,Mathew's gospel brings to us / through a 'very 'vivid `parable //

The 'slave in the ,parable / we are `told / owed 'much to his ,master / the `king // But as he could ,not pay / he begged for `mercy / 'promising to pay 'all debt in due `time // The ,king / out of `pity / for'gave him the whole 'debt of 'ten `thousand talents // But 'after having re'ceived such 'kindness at the hands of the ,king / 'this slave de'manded 'full payment of 'just a 'hundred denarii from his `fellow slave // Since he could ,not pay / he 'had him thrown into `jail // When the 'matter was brought to the king's ,notice / he called 'back the ,slave / whose 'whole debt he had for,given / re'buked him se,verely / and put him into ,jail / un'til he would 'pay his en`tire debt // Our 'Lord then goes ,on to say / so my heavenly 'Father will also do to ,everyone of you / if you do not for'give your brother or sister from your `heart //

'Powerful `words // 'Clear as `crystal // But 'think of the 'reasons of our ,failure / in carrying 'out this di'vine i'deal of com'passion and for`give-ness // One of the 'probable ,reasons may be / that we get 'too much ,fixed / 'more on the `threat im-plied in today's gospel / ,that is / if you do 'not for,give / 'God will `not forgive you / than on the 'mercy and 'love of God for `all / e'specially for

,sinners / as re'flected in the Opening 'Prayer of
to`day's Mass /

May we 'serve you with 'all my ,heart / and
'know your for'giveness in our `lives //
Today's Respon'sorial 'Psalm is even more ex'pli-
cit / The 'Lord is 'kind and `merciful /
'slow to ,anger / and 'rich in com'passion //

So motivation of 'threat is 'not God's normal
'way of bringing a'bout spiritual 'health and sal'va-
tion for us / but His 'mercy and 'love for `all // And
'this is our God / and 'this is 'His way of `caring for
us // And the 'more we ex'perience God's ,merci-
ful / and com'passionate for'giveness in our 'own
personal ,lives / the 'more we will want to 'love
God in re,turn / and the 'more we will ,do / what
'God wants us to do //

'Lovers do 'all they ,can / to a'void o'ffending
the be`loved // Mo'rality for ,Christians / does 'not
con,sist / in o'beying a lot 'rules and `laws / it is pri'-
marily our 'personal re,sponse / to 'God's ever-
'lasting `love for us / God's for'giveness of our `sins
//

It is quite ,possible / that we are 'not yet ,God-
lovers / to the de'gree of which we are `capable /
we may 'still lack an appreciation of how 'much

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

God \lovers us how uncon'ditionally God ,loves us
/ and re'fuses to hold our o'ffences a'gainst us //

A'wareness of God's 'love for us ,in Jesus /
above 'all his having ,chosen us / to 'be his very
own ,children / 'must be 'motivating 'principle of
our 'moral and spiritual \life // And it is 'this kind
of a'wareness and ex'perince of divine ,love / that
will e'nable us to carry 'out the Lord's co,mmand /
Be \merciful / even as your heavenly \Father is
merciful // Be com'passionate / even as your
heavenly \Father is compassionate //

And it 'works the 'other way \too / in the ex-
'perience of for,giving / trying to 'love one
a'nother with 'all our ,hearts / we will 'truly ,know /
the for'giveness of 'God in our \own lives //

In 'Reading ,II / St ,Paul tells us / whether we
'live or whether we ,die / we are the \Lord's // Per-
haps it is ,time for us / to 'let the Lord take 'over
our ,thinking / our de,ciding / and our \acting //

\Prayer

*'Lord our ,God / may we 'always be re'minded of your
,warning / against 'judging and con'demning our fel-
lowmen / and of 'your being the 'only ,judge / who
shows ,mercy / and 'pardons every ,sin / how'ever \great
it be // 'Teach us to show the ,same mercy / to 'those who
offend us // For ,your 'sake / Lord ,Jesus / for the 'free*

'pardon that I hae re,ceived / by the 'power of your 'lov-
 ing 'life and 'saving ,death / I de'sire my for'giving of
 ,others / who have 'harm'd or ,grieved me / to be
 com'plete // Keep me 'so ,mindful of your mercy / that I
 may for'give without seeking satis,faction / and 'love
 where love is not re'turn'd // A'men //

Mt 20:1–16



'Take what be'longs to you and `go / I 'choose to
give to this ,last / the 'same as I give to `you // (v.
14)



The 'readings of the 'last three ,Sundays /
go to 'proving im,plicitly / what Prophet I'-
saiah today re'minds us of God's ,word /
My 'thoughts are not ,your thoughts / 'nor are
your ,ways / `my ways // 'Three Sundays a,go /
'Peter tried to 'argue 'Jesus out of ac'cepting his
'passion and `death / the ,next Sunday / 'Christ's
teaching on the 'need to 'love one's 'neighbour
and fra'ternal co,rrection / con'trasted with our
'normal way of 'dealing with `others // ,last
Sunday / we were ,told / that we 'have to for,give
others / as `God forgives us // And to,day / 'Jesus
through the 'parable about the 'workers in the
,vineyard / i'llustrates God's 'word coming to us
through I,saiah / as re`ferred to ,earlier / my
'thoughts are not ,your thoughts / 'nor are your
,ways / `my ways (Is 55:8) //

God's 'ways are not `our ways / 'this is a 'theme
running 'right through the `Bible // He shows
'mercy when 'people shout for ,judgement /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

makes 'suffering a ,privilege / and does 'not weigh his 'love by `merit // His 'kingdom calls 'for a 'radical 'change in our 'human `values //

Through the 'parable of 'Labourers in the ,vineyard / 'Jesus is 'not trying to teach a 'lesson in 'social ,justice / or dis`tributive justice // He is 'not proposing a 'new kind of ,wage seals / or 'labour re`lations // The 'thrust of the parable is the 'infinite uni`versal ,mercy / and 'love of 'God for `all people // It is 'mercy and 'love that cannot be ,earned / or ,merited / or 'bought with any ,price / 'even by a 'lifetime of 'hardwork in the `vineyard // ,Actually / the 'daily wage Jesus 'speaks about is sal`vation / 'God's own `gift // 'Our work is to ac`cept it gra`tuitously / and re,spond to it / by fi`delity to our ,Christian life / in whatever vo`cation God has ,called us to / by 'caring for one a,nother / and for 'all who are in 'need of any `kind // Our re`sponse is not carried ,out with any in'tention of putting 'God in `debt to us / but 'simply as an ex`pression of 'grateful `love //

It is 'hard enough to 'kill the 'selfish 'instinct in our,selves / the de`sire for the 'best in ma'terial 'benefits and 'personal es`teem // It is for 'harder to kill `spiritual selfishness // We are 'tempted to ,think / that we are more meri,torious / more de`serving of 'God's a,pproval / than 'those who go

to 'church once a `year / who think 'prayer is only
 an e,mergency call / when 'all else ,fails / who
 re'pent at the 'end of a 'wasted and de'structive
 `life // 'Never should we 'think that `way / but
 should 'ever remain ,grateful to think / that 'only
 by the 'grace of a ,Master / whose 'ways are not
 ,our ways / that we are 'allowed to 'walk into the
 `kingdom with them //

It may be borne in 'mind that the 'parable does
 not su'ggest or ,mean / that 'all will be 'treated
 alike in ,heaven / or that there will be 'no re`wards
 // The 'parable of the 'Talents (Mt 25:14–30) seems
 to ,teach / that there `will be rewards // And St
 'Paul `taught it (1 Cor 3:14–15) / 'Jesus here meant
 to 'teach just `one thing / that 'some who ,think /
 in their 'pride and self-,righteousness / they are
 ,first in this world / are going to 'find themselves
 'last in `heaven // He 'said that a `member of
 ,times / (Mt 19:30; 20:16; Mk 10:31; Lk 13:30) / as
 we 'find it in sy`nophic gospels // 'Heavenly
 'standards and ,earthly standards / are 'so 'utterly
 ,different / that 'many of 'earth's 'humblest ,Chris-
 tians / ,slaves / and ,servants / will have the
 'highest places in `heaven / and 'many of the great
 ,church dignitaries / if they are `all / will be under
 'those who were 'here their `servants (Lk 16:19–31)
 //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Jesus probably had some of the 'Pharisees in
'mind in `using this parable // Many of them were
hypo`critical / but their 'greatest 'fault was their
con,viction / that 'God 'owed them sal`vation / be`-
cause of their 'life-long fi,delity / to the minutest
'details of the Mo'saic `Law //

Dear 'brothers and 'sister in Jesus ,Christ /
,negatively / the 'parable ,tells us / that there can
be 'no 'judging of `others / whether they are 'Ro-
man 'Catholic or ,not / 'life long 'Christians or
'deathbed `converts // We can 'always re,member
the parable / those who 'work only an 'hour a ,day
/ re'ceived the ,same wage / as 'those who la-
boured `all days //

It is not for 'us to `judge anyone // We must not
be'grudge sal`vation to anyone // That's the
'Lord's 'privilege and pre'rogative // We must 'not
try to place 'limits on 'God's 'mercy and com`pas-
sion // But we can be 'instruments and e'xamples
of God's ,mercy / by the kind of ,grateful / ,loving
/ 'joyfilled `lives we lead //

What 'we can all ,say is / if 'I have been 'faithful
to the ,Lord / it is 'only because of 'God's fi,delity
to me / God's 'grace and ,mercy / which he 'always
holds `out to me // I may 'not take 'credit for any-
thing I have a`ccomplished // Our 'greatest 'need
as ,Christians / is to 'realize 'fully in our 'inmost

,being / in our 'heart of ,hearts / how 'much God
has ,loved / and con,tinues to love us / how 'great
has been 'God's `mercy to us //

Prayer

*`Take from me / loving ,Master / the 'burden of self-
`righeousness // When I 'feel most 'sure of my 'faith and
'good ,works / 'then I am most in `danger // 'Thank you
for the 'love that is not ,measured / that brings 'sinners
and 'generous `good // 'Let me not be 'enivous of your
'gifts to `others // A`men //*

Mt 20:15–16



Or are you 'envious because I am ,generous // So
the 'last will be ,first / and the 'first will be `last //
(Mt 20:15, 16)



The 'verses taken from the 'parable of the
'Labourers in the ,vineyard / and found
only in ,Mathew's gospel / are of the most
'eloquent of the en`tire gospel // The parable is a
'further ex,pansion / and illu'stration of the 'point
Jesus made in the 'close of the fore,going chapter /
But 'many who are 'first will be ,last / and the 'last
will be `first (Mt 19:30) //

'These are the 'main 'notions and their ap-
pli,cations / the 'parable is de`signed for: /

1. As the 'parable appears 'only in ,Mathew
/ it be'longs to the 'early 'Jewish Chris-
tian tra,dition / when the Jewish 'con-
verts were probably ,envious / that the
'Gentiles who were ad'mitted ,late / were
'put on 'equal 'standing with the ,Jews /
in the 'early `church // The ad'mission of
the 'Gentiles being a 'burning and major
,problem / and 'cause for con'troversies

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

in the Apo,stolic Church / a 'peaceful
'settlement of the conflict was ,reached /
in a 'manner as 'indicated by to'day's
parable //

2. 'God is 'debtor to 'no 'man / how'ever
im'portant he/she is 'deemed here in the
'world // God's 'justice is 'over and above
the for'mality of 'human justice // It
takes into a'ccount the 'greater ,needs of
people / of 'those who are standing 'idle
in the 'market place (v. 3) against their
,will / because 'no one has 'hired them //
The 'workers of the e'leventh 'hour have
the 'same ,right to work / as the 'first 'la-
bourers / and the 'right for 'them and
their family to 'live from that work //
The funda'mental human 'right to ,work
/ and to ,live from that work / is not
re,spected / when a so'ciety and its 'legal
,order / do 'not pro'vide full em'ploy-
ment for its ,people / in the name of eco'-
nomic ,laws / which are made to
coin,cide / 'only with 'profit and 'priv-
ilege of a 'few //
3. 'Envy and 'selfishness bring in ,problems
/ and cre'ate all 'types of 'trouble / both

in the co'mmunity and in the indi'vidual
 // It is the 'evil 'eye that makes us ,think /
 that what is 'just for ,others / is un'just
 for us / if it a'ffects our `privileges //

4. 'Not looking with an ,evil eye / is a 're-
 quisite for be'lievers in the 'good and
 `generous God // If we a'void ,greed / we
 will 'prove ourselves to be the a'roma of
 'Christ to ,God (2 Cor 2:15) / among the
 'people a`round / as St 'Paul states in his
 'letter the Co`rinthians //
5. 'God the 'landowner of the ,vineyard /
 does not de,mand of us / 'mere
 ob'servance of 'legal and formal `justice
 // His 'goodness and gene,rosity de-
 mands of us / to go be'yond these
 ,boundaries / and move 'generously and
 ,freely / to 'look for 'those whom so'ciety
 'marginalizes and o`ppresses // As I,saiah
 tells us // 'God is `great / and His 'ways
 are not `our ,ways // We 'have to be
 'open at all ,times / to the 'newness and
 crea'tivity of God's `love //
6. Our re'sponse to 'God's gene,rosity /
 should be ex'pressed by our gene'rosity
 in our 'service to 'God and `neighbour /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

in'cluding those who are 'not to our ,lik-
ing / and are 'even our `enemies //

7. The 'recompense of re,ward / will be
given to 'saintly ,souls / 'not according to
,time of their conversion / 'not accord-
ing to the seni,ority / but according to
the 'measure of the 'stature of the `ful-
ness of Christ //

8. 'Many ,men/ counted as 'least in terms
of 'faith and ,character / sometimes by
the 'blessing of ,God / 'later prove to be
'far ,better/ and 'promising 'members of
the co,munity / than ,those ones / who
be'gan working ,well enough / and 'early
for the co`mmunity // It would avail
'little for the ,first workers / 'members of
the community with 'good be,ginning in
service / unless they 'keep up their 'zeal
con`sistently / lest they 'end up ,last / in
the 'final `reckoning // A'gain they have
'reason to ,fear / lest they them'selves
should be found 'hypocrites at `last / for
'many are ,called / but 'few are `chosen //
- In ,other words / there are but 'few
,chosen Christians / in comparison with

the ,many / that are only `called Christi-
ans //

9. 'Who ,knows / and 'who can ,tell / that
the 'church in its 'old ,age / may be more
'graceful and 'flourishing than `ever /
thanks to the 'labourers sent into the
,vineyard / in the e'leventh `hour //

Mt 20:17–28



Whoever wishes to be ,great among you / 'must be
your `servant / and whoever wishes to be ,first
among you / 'must be your `slave / just as the son
of ,Man came / 'not be `served / but to 'serve and
to give his 'life a 'ransom for `many // (vv. 26–28)



I God became 'man in 'order to make
'men `God-like // Even to ,day / 'God's
sal'vification is being con'tinued with
'this end in `view // But en'grossed in the 'pleas-
ures of 'body and ,mind / 'man did not 'recognize
the ,God / who became 'flesh to 'save `mankind //
'Men with their 'physical ,eyes / 'failed to break
'open the ma'terial ,plane / and 'reach the 'spir-
itual `realm // It's a 'sad ,truth / that 'man ,failed /
in re'sponding 'gracefully to the di'vine di'men-
sions of 'God's salvific ,plan / while 'living in the
'physical `world // The 'words of the e,vangelist /
that he 'came to what was his `own / and his 'own
people did `not accept him (Jn 1:11) / form the
'summary of 'man's re'sponse to 'God's sal'vific
i,nitiatives / in the 'history of sal'vation //

The 'point of dis'cussion in to'day's gospel
,passage / is 'centred round the 'worldly re'sponse

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

to the divine reve^lation by the di^sciples / who had been 'Jesus 'constant com^panions for 'three ,years / and had 'listened to his ,teachings / and 'witnessed the 'signs and `wonders wrought by him // It is in 'this ,context / Jesus comes 'out with his ,teaching / that one who 'serves is 'really the 'first and the `greatest //

The 'Jewish ,people / who had been sub^jected to the 'Roman re^gime and do^minion for ,ages / longed to be ,freed from it / and ex^pected 'Jesus to re^stor^e their `nation // In the e^mergence of ,such a nation / the 'sons of 'Zebedee wanted to pro^cure the 'prominent posts of `power // They 'failed to under^stand the ,kingdom of God / and his di^vine 'plan re^vealed through 'Jesus // When 'God the 'Word set a^side His e^quality with the ,Godhead / and 'emptied Himself by putting 'on the ,human form / 'God and His sal^vific 'plan be^came unac^ceptable // The 'sons of Zebedee 'symbolize all 'those who fail to under^stand / the sal^vific 'plan re^vealed by God in 'Jesus //

'Jesus is 'teaching the di^sciples / 'frantically after ,power / 'titles and ,honours / who the 'really 'first and `great is // His 'teaching rendered the 'wordly 'norms i^rrelevant // Whoever wishes to be ,great among you / 'must be your `servant / and whoever wishes to be ,first among you / 'must be

your `slave // We `know that `Jesus gave this ,teach-
 ing / drawn from his `own `life // His life it'self
 proved to be his `teaching // What he came `for
 was `not to be ,served / but to `serve //

He became the `humblest of ,men / in order to
 `save the ,mankind / `wounded by `sin // He re-
 ceived `wounds in his `own ,body / to `heal the
 wounds `afflicting the `human `soul // He `saved
 `many from the ,slavery of sin / by becoming a
 `servant of `all servants // `Shunning all ,power /
 he `served as a ,servant / to `save power ,mongers /
 and `those after `praise and `honour from `men //
 He sub`jected himself to ,death / to re`deem ,man-
 kind / `dying in `sin // He who was the `first and
 ,greatest of all / became the ,humblest of all / to
 `save the `whole of `humankind // Thus we have
 `Jesus' ,teachings / e`xemplified by his `own life-
 ,teachings / that go be`yond `human con,ceptions /
 and `contrary to `human `norms //

`This is indeed a ,message / that is i`mmensely
 `relevant in the `modern ,world / when `man is
 getting `more and more `frenzied for po`ssewing
 `power and ,status / in the `midst of ma`terial `pro-
 gress // The a`ttire of a `slave and `life of a ,servant
 / draw `no `attraction for `modern `man // But the
 `call of a ,Christian / is to `be a `slave of ,slaves /
 and `servant of `servants // `Only by re`sponding

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

to ,this call / can 'modern 'man in di'stress find his
'rest and `peace // 'Even the 'conquest and po'sses-
sion of the 'whole ,world / 'doesn't bring a so'lution
to the 'restlessness of the 'human `heart //
'After the e'xample of ,Jesus / 'only by being a'vail-
able to 'others through 'humble ,service / can 'hu-
man 'heart find the 'peace and con'tentment it
'longs for // When we make 'Jesus' life'style our
,own / and wholeheartedly re'ceive his model of
,service / our re'sponse to ,God / re'vealing him-
self for the sal'vation of 'man becomes re'demptive
//

'Only a 'person 'freed from ,selfishness / which
is the 'root cause of all 'sins and ,evils / can make
'Jesus the life `model // If the 'spirit of 'Lenten
'season is to be ,realized in us / we 'are to be 'liber-
ated from the `self // We 'have to be 'ready for a
'change of `heart // Thus we who 'live in this
,world / will co'operate with 'God's salvific ,plan /
and par'take of this ,glory / by 'serving ,others / in
'real 'Christian `spirit //

Mt 21:1–17



A 'very large ,crowd / spread their 'cloaks on the
'road / and 'others cut 'branches from the ,trees /
and 'spread them on the road // The crowds that
went a'head of him and that 'followed were
,shouting / Ho'sanna to the 'Son of David // 'B-
lessed is the ,one / who comes in the 'name of the
'Lord // Ho'sanna in the highest 'heaven // (vv. 8,
9)



Visitors and fellow ,soldiers / 'forward /
forward / 'forward // 'These are the
'words of Na'poleon ,Bonaparte / 'Em-
peror of the ,French / 'frequently addressed to his
fellow ,soldiers / on their 'onward march to 'con-
quering various 'countries of the 'world // This
'world's well 'known ,conqueror / and great 'milit-
ary ,genius / and 'brilliant soldier ,statesman / said
in his 'famous 'Farewell to the 'Old ,Guard /
A'dieu / my ,friends / Be 'always 'gallant and ,good
// 'Do not for'get me //

But 'who pays 'heed to 'these final 'words of
'plea from Na'poleon the ,Great / to'day // 'Where
is this war ,hero / who 'led his deadly 'army ,for-
ward / along the ,war field / 'levelled by the 'dead

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

bodies of 'thousands of ,soldiers / for his 'own
'honour and self-`glory // De'spite his final 'plea
not to for, get him / he lies there ,dead / joining
the ma,jority / 'not borne in 'minds of his own
,country men / but con'fined to some 'pages of
,history / 'resting hopefully in 'peace with him`self
//

But 'Christ / the ,King of kings / did 'not spend
a 'single drop of 'blood of his ,followers / to per'-
petuate his 'name and `glory / but 'poured out his
'live and 'warm 'blood to the 'last `drop / thus
'Christ's resurr'ection is the su'preme e'vent of his
ever'lasting ,kingship / that wears the 'crown of
e'ternity // To'day being Palm ,Sunday / the be'-
ginning of the 'Holy ,Week / when we start pre'-
paring for the 'greatest of 'feasts in the ,Church /
the feast of Resurr,ection / the 'Mother Church
pro'vides us with the most su'blime oppor,tunity /
to 'meditate on 'Christ's ,kingship / and his 'royal
au'thority //

`Kingship of Jesus

The 'kingship of 'Christ had been pre'dicted
long be,fore / as 'different from that of 'other
kings be'fore Christ // 'Jacob in the Old ,Testa-
ment / 'blessed the tribe of ,Judah / by 'granting it
an ever 'stable 'royal au'thority / The 'scepter shall
not de'part from `Judah (Genesis 49:10) // 'Prophet

Zechariah ex'horts Je,rusalem / to 'welcome
 'Christ the 'King / Re'joice 'greatly / O 'daughter of
 ,Zion / Shout a'loud / O 'daughter Je,rusalem / 'Lo
 / your 'king 'comes to you (Zach 9:9) //

'Christ himself de'clared in 'clear 'terms and
 'powerful 'manner regarding his 'kingship / 'My
 'kingdom is 'not from 'this world (Jn 18:36) // He
 would e'vade all o,ccasions / when a'ttempts were
 made by the ,crowd / to 'crown him their 'earthly
 'king // In the ,Lord's prayer / our 'prayer that
 your 'kingdom come / the 'notion of 'God's 'reign
 and 'Christ's 'kingdom has been made 'clear //

'Christ the 'King is 'not like 'kings of the 'Israel-
 ites / or like 'other ,rulers / that 'history has re'cor-
 ded // The 'distance he 'travelled from 'Bethphage
 at the Mount of 'Olives to Je,rusalem / was 'quite
 in a 'humble ,manner / 'mounted on a 'donkey /
 and here'by to ful'fil the 'prophecy of Zechariah
 (9:9) // He is 'not one like a war ,hero / 'travelling
 seated on a 'horse // 'Shunning all 'vain and 'per-
 sonal ,glory / that 'king of ,peace / pro'cessed
 down the ,way / mounted on a ,donkey / that he
 'got at the 'mercy and hospi'tality of a 'stranger //
 He ,did so / 'obviously to re'move the po'litical
 'colour and ,glamour / a'ssociated with the title of
 the 'son of David // But the 'huge 'crowd that
 greeted him ,victory shouting / Ho'sanna /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

per,ceived Christ / as an `earthly king // But the
'real ,meaning of Hosanna is / `Help us ,Lord / be
of 'help to `Israel //

'Do we who are the 'new Israel invoke ,Christ /
just for our ma'terial 'needs and re,quirements //
Do we ac'knowledge 'Christ as our 'spiritual ,king
// St 'Thomas confessed his ,faith saying / My
,Lord / and my `God // St 'Peter as well made his
con,fession of faith / 'You are the ,Christ / 'Son of
the `living God // 'Thus our 'forbears acknow-
ledged the `kingship of Christ // Let's 'also imbibe
the 'spirit of our 'spiritual `fathers //

'Royal Au`thority

'Christ who 'entered the ,temple / ex'plicitly
de'clared his kingly au`thority / My 'house shall be
called a 'house of `prayer / but you are 'making it a
'den of `robbers (v. 13) // 'Christ `cleansed the
temple // 'Temple is the `house of prayer // It is
the 'symbol of 'Christ him`self // He de,clared /
De'stroy this `temple I will 'raise it a'gain within
'three `days // What he 'said was about the 'temple
of his own `body //

The 'cleansing of temple is 'seen as an e,vent /
that earned him the di'spleasure of 'chief priests
and `scribes / an e'vent that laid the foun'dation
for Christ's 'sufferings and `death // It was 'not the
'sacrifices and 'offerings in the temple that

en`raged Christ / on the ,contrary / it was the in-
 ,justice and exploi'tation the high 'priests and reli-
 gious 'leaders in,dulged in / that pro'voked his
 moral pro'test and `anger // He 'harshly 'ques-
 tioned their business a'ffairs in the `temple // Ig-
 'noring the 'sanctity and ,holiness of the temple /
 the 'Jewish religious 'leaders turned it into a 'den
 of 'robbers in `two ways / in terms of in'justice to
 the co,munity / and 'insult to `God //

'Now it is quite 'fitting and a'ppropriate that we
 ,think over / 'how much 'reverence and re'spect we
 show to our 'parish ,church / which is the 'symbol
 of 'Christ him`self // 'How 'holy do we con'sider
 our own ,body / which is the 'temple of the 'Holy
 `Spirit //

When 'Christ the Lord ex'posed the 'rot that
 got 'into the so'ciety of the ,times / the society con'-
 demned him `mercilessly // But 'Christ de,clared /
 For 'this I was ,born / and for 'this I came 'into the
 ,world / to 'testify to the `truth (Jn 18:37) // Thus
 he waged 'war through his ,sufferings / to the
 cause of 'truth and ,love / and 'triumphed over
 'evil and 'death by his resurre`ction // Just as
 'Christ the Lord re'newed the co'mmunity he
 ,lived in / so also 'we who are 'part of his 'mystical
 ,body / are duty-'bound to re'new our
 co'mmunity // 'This Palm ,Sunday / ,we / the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'brothers and 'sisters of 'Christ the ,King / are 'c-
alled upon to 'testify to the ,truth / by ,sanctifying
ourselves / and being the 'leaven of the
co,munity / and then 'acting 'gallantly and 'pas-
sionately at what,ever cost / to the cause of 'truth
and ,love / as 'Christ the `King did //

Mt 21:19



May no 'fruit ever 'come from you `again // (Mt 21:19)



After 'God had created the 'humankind 'male and ,female / and in ,his image / the 'first 'blessing they were to re'ceive from ,God the creator was / Be 'fruitful and `multiply (Gen 1:28) // 'Ever since the be,ginning of creation / bio'logical 'fruitfulness has been con'sidered by ,man / a 'God-given 'gift or `blessing // According to the ,Bible / the 'same blessing was to given 'plants and 'animals on ,earth / to en'sure e'nough 'food for `men // 'Plants and 'animals when found 'barren or ,fruitless / are done a`way with by men //

'People who think 'Jesus had a fit of 'temper with the ,fig-tree / de'scribed in to'day's gospel ,passage / 'fail to see the 'deeper 'meaning of the 'whole `episode // Jesus' 'action was a sym'bolic `act // The 'fig-tree is a 'symbol of 'all that the temple stood `for // It 'failed to bear `fruit // Hence the 'fall of 'Lord's `wrath and `curse on the tree //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

This 'cursing of the 'barren fig-tree repre'sents the 'state of 'hypocrites / and it 'teaches us to be 'really ,fruitful / in'stead of wearing the 'cover of fruitfulness / namely 'leaves // 'Hypocrites may look 'plausible for a 'time / but their pro'fession will 'soon come to 'nothing / as it 'happened to the state of the 'nation in ,general / and people of the 'Jews in par'ticular // They were a 'fig-tree planted in 'Christ's 'way // But they gave disa'p-pointment to our 'Lord Jesus // He 'came a,mong them / ex'pecting to 'find some 'fruit / something that would be 'pleasing to him // But his expec'tations were fru'strated / he found 'nothing but 'leaves // 'Never any 'good came 'from them // They didn't re'ceive and enter'tain him // After they re'jected Christ / they became 'worse and 'worse / 'blindness and 'hardness fell u,p, upon them / and 'grew upon them // 'Withering of their 'fig-tree was 'quick / after they ,said / His 'blood be on ,us / and our 'children //

When the di'sciples 'marvelled at the 'sudden-ness of the ,withering of the fig-tree / in the wake of 'curse by ,Christ / the 'Lord avails the o'ccasion to ,teach his disciples / the e'ffectiveness of 'prayer with 'faith // In case in 'prayer you 'doubt the 'power and 'promise of ,God / your 'prayer proves to be ine'ffective and 'fruitless // But 'when done

in ,faith / your 'prayer will work such ,wonders / as
 would 'seem to you im`possible // So you 'are to
 be,lieve / that 'nothing is im`possible with God //
 In ,prayer / 'faith is the `soul / and the 'prayer and
 its ,forms said / constitute the `body // So 'prayer
 wi,thout faith / is a'kin to 'body without `soul / and
 ,hence / ,leafy / ,fruitless / `lifeless // But when you
 'pray with ,faith / with your 'heart and 'soul put
 ,into it / what'ever you ask ,for / you will rec'eive
 for `sure //

Mt 21:28–32



'Truly I ,tell you / the 'tax-collectors and the ,pros-
titutes / are going into the 'kngdom of 'God a`head
of you // (v. 31)



The 'parable of the two ,sons / de'scribed in
'Mt 2,1 / 2'8–3,2 / is aimed 'at di'rectly at
the re'ligious 'leaders of Jesus' `times /
namely ,chief priests / ,elders / ,Scribes / and
'Pharisees // They re`jected Jesus // The ,reason
was / both 'Jesus and 'John the 'Baptist 'operated
out'side the ,system / those re'ligious leaders had
set `up // Though 'Jesus and his herald 'John
'questioned the pre,vailing system / their 'protest
was 'never in ,ways / that 'contravened any 'bib-
lical `laws // But they 'both were 'irritating for
those religious ,leaders / who 'felt that 'leadership
in re'ligion and spiritu'ality was `their job //

They were 'all very re,spectable men / in the
'Jewish co`mmunity // They ful'filled all their re'li-
gious obli'gatiions to the ,letter / and made the re'-
quired contri,butions / to the 'maintenance of the
'Temple // And they were 'very 'quick to `judge
and con,demn / those who did 'not follow 'their
way of `life / e'specially the 'tax-collectors and the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

fallen `women // But the so-'called re,ligious lead-
ers / re'fused to 'hear and 'heed John's 'call to
re`pentance / and as ,Jesus says / the 'tax-collectors
and the 'prostitutes be`lieved him / and 'even after
you ,saw it / you did not 'change your 'minds and
be`lieve him // Jesus does 'not even ,mention /
that the religious 'leaders re'fused to ac'cept his
'own plea for repentance / for 'true and 'genuine
re'ligion is that of the `heart / and 'not just ex-
'ternal com'pliance with `rules // They were 'not
the kind of 'sheep mentioned in to'day's Alle,lua
Verse /

My 'sheep 'listen to my ,voice says the Lord /
I `know them / and they `follow me //

The religious 'leaders did not 'want to be `Je-
sus' sheep / they did 'not choose to 'listen to his
'voice and `follow him // vTrue / they 'claimed to
be good ob'servers of the `law // But Jesus ,told
them / they would be pre'ceded in the ,kingdom
of God / by 'those whom they con'sidered as the
'law's 'greatest `violators / namely 'tax-collectors
and ,prostitutes / the `public sinners // These
,people / though 'branded as ,sinners / came to
their 'senses to put into 'practice the `will of the
Father / just like the 'first 'son in today's ,parable /
who de'spite his i'nitial reser,vation / did the `will

of his father / as ad'mitted by the re,ligious leaders / Jesus' \listeners // Al'though he was a 'sinner in his 'words or re'ply to his father's ,order / to go and 'work in the ,vineyard by saying / 'I will \not / his 'action ended 'up by saying \yes // On the ,contrary / the 'second 'son proved to be a 'liar / ac'cepting or obeying in 'theory the 'will of the father (v. 29) by saying ,yes // But his 'action amounted to re\jection / or saying \no / to his father's \order //

Now in ,Jesus' eyes / doing the 'will of the Father or putting it into ,practice / takes pre'-cedence over just saying ,yes to it / but 'not doing \anything about it // Then 'Jesus raised the ,question to his listeners / 'mainly the religious ,leaders / leaving them 'no 'room to e,scape / and de'manding their dis\cernment / 'which of the 'two did the \will of his father (v. 31) // It is not e'nough that his 'listeners answer his 'question by ,just saying / the \first // 'Those who were 'listening to Jesus ,knew / they were being \challenged / with 'which one of the two 'sons did they i\dentify // 'Which did they 'think was the 'way of 'righteousness //

In today's ,First Reading / E'zekiel tells us (v. 27) to 'do what is 'lawful and \right / ,All of us / without ex\ception / must 'constantly con'vert to

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

this 'righteousness which is 'life // This 'mandate is the 'judge of our 'lives / making us all 'humble / and 'not as 'arrogant as to be,lieve / that we are 'righteous / pointing our 'fingers at the be'haviour and be'liefs of ,those / who do not a'gree with us //

To do the ,will of the Father / Lord 'Jesus shows us through the ,Second Reading / the 'way of hu'mility / He 'emptied himself taking the 'form of a 'slave (Phil 2:7) // He 'left every 'privilege behind // Now the in'euitable 'question put to us 'through today's ,reading's is / do 'we want to ,listen to Jesus / and 'follow him //

Re'member / we 'don't have to be 'tax-collectors or 'prostitutes to 'listen to and 'follow Jesus // 'All we ,need is / a bit of dissatis'faction with our 'past and 'present ,life / and a 'genuine de'sire to be con'verted to him / with 'all our 'heart //

Dear 'brothers and 'sisters in Jesus ,Christ / we 'do stumble and 'fall / we 'do shift and 'fail / but 'God is ,always there / 'ready to pick us 'up // God 'never gives 'up on us / even though 'we may give up on our,selves // 'Jesus wants re'pentance / but the 'kind of repentance that takes us be'yond good in'tentions // Re,member / con'version for most 'Christians is a matter of a 'whole 'lifetime // It's 'ongoing // It 'never 'ceases to 'challenge us // The 'final re,sult is / that we be'come the kind of 'per-

sons we `ought to be / 'not the kind we `were //
 This 'deep inner 'change is ,possible / 'only
 through the 'power of God's ,grace / working u-
 pon our sin'cere re`pentance // As for ,God's grace
 / we 'have to ,want it / and 'open our 'hearts to it
 through re`pentance // And 'that's why we 'pray in
 today's ,Opening Prayer /

,Father / you show your al'mighty ,power /
 in your 'mercy and for`giveness //
 Con'tinue to 'fill us with your 'gifts of `love //
 'Help us to 'hurry toward the e'ternal 'life
 you ,promise / and come to 'share in the 'joys of
 your `kingdom // A`men //

Mt 21:33–44



Therefore I tell ,you / the 'kingdom of God will be taken a ,way from you / and given to a 'people that pro'duces the `fruits of the kingdom // (v. 43)



The 'chief priests and ,Pharisees / well-'read on 'passages in the Old ,Testament / des'cribing 'Israel as 'Yahveh's ,vineyard / found it very 'easy to under'stand the parable of the 'wicked ,tenants / told by Christ `Jesus (Is 5:1-7) // When they 'realized that with ,this parable / he was speaking a ,bout them / they were 'so en ,raged at it / as to get him a`rrested //

If ,we / who 'live in the New ,Testament times / con'sider this ,world we live in / as the 'vineyard of Lord ,Yahweh / we can 'see that the parable in to'day's ,circumstances / carries a sal'vific 'message for `each of us //

The 'owner of the vineyard in the 'parable planted a ,vineyard / put a ,fence / dug a 'pit for the 'wine press to squeeze out ,wine from grapes / and built a `watch tower in it // Be'sides all these ,things / all the a`rrangements needed for a 'vineyard were made by the ,owner / be'fore leaving it to `tenants / after which he 'went to a'nother

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'country // At the ,harvest time / the 'owner sent ,slaves to the tenants / to co'lect from them 'his share of the `produce of the vineyard // But not 'only couldn't the 'slaves pro,cure any share / but were 'mercilessly ,persecuted / and done a'way with one after a'nother // ,Finally / the 'owner sent his 'only `son / but to 'get no 'different re`sult // And then in the ,end / the 'tenants got the 'punishment they de`served //

'Here we have 'mainly ,three things / to come to our conside'ration and re`flection:

1. A'bout ,God //
2. A'bout ,men / living in this ,world //
3. A'bout Lord ,Jesus / the Me`siah //

I. A'bout `God

- a) Like the ,owner of the vineyard / God has en'trusted to us 'manifold `gifts // And we have been a'llowed to 'deal with them `freely // 'Each and every ,one of us / is to 'serve as 'stewards of the precious 'treasures of God-`given gifts //
- b) 'God's `patience // How 'often have we been for,given by Him / for mis'using the ,gifts entrusted to us / 'several times 'sparing us

from 'quick `punishment // How 'often
were we a'llowed to go a,head / after co'r-
recting the mis`takes made by us //

- c) The 'final `judgement // 'That is 'God's own
`right // 'No one is e'xempted from being
sub`jected to it //

II. A'bout `man

- a) This 'parable helps us re'call with ,gratitude
/ the 'blessings 'man has re,ceived from
God / who cre'ated him as the 'crown of the
'visible `universe // If 'God has given 'man
,duties to fulfil / he has 'also been pro'vided
with the 'necessary en,vironment / to dis-
'charge them `properly //
- b) God 'does re'spect the `freedom of man //
- c) How'ever much we may 'try to e,vade it / we
'are to 'settle our 'final a'ccount with the
cre`ator //
- d) All the 'evils that 'man the cre'ated one
,does / are 'acts done de,liberately / or o'-
missions like those by the `tenants in the

'HOMILIES made more IN`TELLIGIBLE

parable / it is 'neither due to ,ignorance /
nor ina`bility //

III. A`bout Lord ,Jesus / the Me`siah

The 'only ,Son of God / 'promised to 'mankind
as the 'Christ and ,Saviour / is 'also a `subject of
this parable //

- a) The Me`siah is ,not one / like the 'other
`prophets // He is the 'only begotten 'Son of
God the `Father //
- b) There is 'reference in this 'parable to 'Christ
pre`dicting his ,death / and su`rrendering
his 'life `freely //

As de`scribed in the parable of 'vineyard in the
,Gospel / 'God has done all a`rrangements 'needed
for us ,men / to 'live on this `earth // All the 'ob-
jects seen in the ,galaxy / are 'so 'organized by
their 'mutual a`ttraction / as to be`fit and 'benefit
our 'earthly `life // We are given ,air to breath /
,water to drink / and `food to eat // God the
'gardener has made 'huge in,vestments for us / in
terms of 'rain and ,sunshine / the 'seas and ,rivers /
and 'forests with their 'rich re`sources // It's in-
deed 'God's immense gene`rosity flowing out of
his 'limitless ,love / that we have the 'admirable

'ordering and a,rrangement / 'found among all the living `beings // We 'owe immense 'gratitude to the 'loving 'God for `all this // It is ,his right / that we 'duly offer him our 'love and ,gratitude / in consider'ation of the 'mystery of His 'loving `providence //

'May we be not 'found among the class of ,people / who create 'hardships for them,selves / without making 'prudent and proper 'use of their God-'given ,blessings / and 'then 'blaming God on that `count // The 'main 'reason for the 'stark 'poverty and im,poverishment / experienced by 'man in the ,world today / is only the dis'ruction caused by the unjust and equal distri'bution of 'wealth and resources cre'ated by `God // The 'sole responsi'bility for 'this being u'pon the 'selfish and 'loveless ,mindset of man / 'why should we 'blame the good `God for the same // It 'doesn't serve any `purpose // It is 'blasphemy to a,ttribute to God / the responsi'bility of all 'sufferings and evils cre'ated by `man himself // 'This holds 'good as well with regard to the 'current 'spread of Co'rona 19 'virus from ,China / to 'various other 'countries in the `world //

Just as the 'owner of the 'vineyard 'freely en-'trusted the vineyard to the ,tenants / 'God re'spects the 'freedom of ,men / the 'tenants of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

this `world of vineyard // Let's e,xamine ourselves / whether 'we are moving towards 'death and de,struction / by a'busing the 'precious gift of ,freedom / that 'God has given 'man to act `with // See how 'patient 'God is with ,us / as the 'owner of the 'vineyard was with the `tenants // The 'tenants were given 'several oppor,tunities / to give the 'owner the `share of their produce // The 'patience shown by the ,owner / in sending a'gain his 'own son to the ,same tenants / who had 'earlier in'sulted and 'killed the ,messengers sent to them / is 'really di`vine //

How 'great is the ,patience / that 'God showed by in'sisting on Jo'an'an the prophet 'going to ,Nineveh / to 'save the Ninevites from their in'dulgence in `sin / the 'promise of old by 'God to ,Abraham / that the city of 'Nineveh would not be de,stroyed / if at least 'ten 'just 'men were to be `found over there // 'People who are sub'jected to 'God's 'final ,punishment / are 'those who 'consciously and re'peatedly re'ject the God-'given oppor'tunities for re,pentance / in a 'guilty `manner // It is 'very much ,certain / that 'people in the 'world today who in'dulge in co,rruption / and 'wrong and un'healthy 'sexual ,practises / in de'fiance and for'getfulness of 'God's e'xistence and co,mmandments / will 'surely meet with 'God's

`punishment / un'less they de'sist from their `sins
 // 'Let's think about our 'personal `life // 'Don't we
 keep 'getting premo'nitions and re'minders as
 given to the `tenants of the vineyard // We 'ven-
 ture to 'test God's ,patience / when we 'live indul-
 ging in ,sins / with'out offering to 'God the good
 'fruits of a 'virtuous ,life / 'pleasing to 'God and
 `men //

Mt 22:1–14



Go therefore into the ,main streets / and in'vite
'everyone you find to the `wedding banquet (v. 9)

//

And he said to him ,Friend / how did you get ,in
here / wi`thout a wedding robe // (v. 11)



To'day what we have for our re'flection is
in fact `two parables / the parable of the
,wedding guests / and that of the 'man
'not wearing the `wedding robe // 'Both parables
deal with being in'vited to the `Kingdom // The
'first one was to in'form the 'chief priests and ,eld-
ers / how 'tragic it was to re'fuse to accept the in-
vi'ation by ,Jesus / to `come to the banquet of sal-
vation // It was the 'final and 'last 'effort on the
part of 'Jesus to win them `over // But they re'f-
used // 'They were the ones who had the 'know-
ledge of the ,law / in addition to their 'high social
,rank / people who had ,farms / ,businesses / or
,interests / which they placed a'head of the invi'ta-
tion to the kingdom // More'over they mis`treated
the slaves // ,obviously / those in'vited were not
,`worthy (v. 8) //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'God's invi'tation to the kingdom is i'rrevoc-
able / and is 'always `open // But its addre'sses
must be 'sought in a'nother social `level / Go
therefore into the ,main streets / and in'vite
'everyone you find to the `wedding banquet v. 9 //
'These are the places of 'people who have no
,home / no 'steady em,ployment / or no 'busi-
nesses in the `city / the ,poor / and the ,outcasts /
those con'sidered as 'ignorant and ,sinful / by the
re'ligious `leaders of the people // Mathew 'adds
that in the main ,streets / they gathered 'all whom
they ,found / both 'good and ,bad / so the wedding
hall was 'filled with `guests (v. 10) //

'This is to make ,clear / that people are in,vited
/ 'not because of their `merits / but rather be'cause
of the gra'tuitous 'goodness of 'God toward the
,poor / the ,last / the `sinners // God's 'grace trans'-
forms the unin,vited / into the 'privileged ad-
dre'sses of the heavenly ,banquet / the ,kingdom /
the sal'vation //

In ,Mathew / unlike in 'Luke's parallel ,text /
the parable con'tinues with a'nother `theme //
Someone turns 'up for the ,banquet / wi'thout a
wedding robe // Ac'cepting the invi'tation to the
'kingdom re,quires / that those in'vited should be
pre'pared / they 'need to wear the 'wedding gar-

ment of ,grace / un'stained by spots of 'serious `sin
//

The parable is 'also an a'ppropriate 'image of
the Holy 'Eucharist // Holy 'Eucharist is our 'best
oppor,tunity / for 'giving ourselves to ,God / and
ack'nowledging 'God's `lordship over our lives //
Holy 'Mass is 'God's 'greatest gift of `love for us /
'greatest gift of ,love / because it is 'Jesus himself
whom ,God gives us / for our sal'vation //

But the 'guest spoken of in the ,gospel text /
was being 'too `casual // He is the 'image of those
who come to ,Mass in the church / ,casually /
unpre,pared / not in 'love and 'charity with their
,neighbours / 'gossiping instead of 'making them-
selves ,ready / for the time of `worship // Now
coming to our,selves / do 'we make 'full prepa'ra-
tion for the Holy 'Mass and our co,munion //
Those who ac'cept the gracious irri,tation of /
wi'thout truly re'sponding to its obli,gations /
should 'not feel like 'patronizing those who have
re'fused it // Re'member / there is not ,one of us /
whose 'wedding robe is i'mmaculate //

`Prayer

*Gracious ,God / I am too 'often an un'worthy ,guest / at
your di'vine `table // I ,come to you / carrying my 'doubt
and an,xiety / my re'sentment of ,other guests / my in-*

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'difference to 'seeking your 'full `purpose for me // Have
'mercy on my `weakness / and bring me to the 'right
'mind and a true 'heart in Holy `Mass / so that I may
not 'fall under judgement / when I 'taste your 'heavenly
`banquet // A`men //

Mt 22:23–33



He is 'God not of the ,dead / but of the 'living //
(v. 32)



The 'Sadducees who raised the 'question about resurr'ection with ,Jesus / we are 'told / were the 'fewest in 'number of all the ,sects / among the 'Jews in Jesus' 'times //
Though a mi'nority in terms of ,numbers / their 'group comprised ,persons / that enjoyed some ,rank / by way of 'wealth and 'influence in the so'ciety //
En'lightened 'men of the ,times / how-ever 'censored their 'views and ,lifestyle / for be-ing 'base and de'bauched //

Their ,stand was / there is 'no 'future 'state / 'no 'life here'after / when the 'animated 'body ,dies / the 'soul is a,nnihilated / and 'dies with it //
Except ,God / there is 'no 'spirit //
The class of 'Pharisees among the ,Jews however / ack'nowledged re-surr,ection / 'angels and ,spirits / as stated in 'Acts 2,3 / '8 //
Though the 'Pharisees professed to be'lieve a resur'rection of ,bodies / they had 'very 'gross and 'carnal ,notions / concerning the 'future 'state / they ex'pected to ,find there / the de'lights and 'pleasures of the 'animal 'life //
'This concep-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

tion of resurr'ection perhaps drove the ,Sadducees / to de'ny resurr'ection itself // Though the 'Sad-
ducees and 'Pharisees were 'contrary to each
'other in their ,views / they were 'confederates
against `Christ // Their coming to'gether against
,Christ was / because 'both the groups felt
,threatened / by His 'message and the 'lifestyle He
en'couraged / in His 'teaching in the ,Temple / in
the 'final 'week of His 'life on `earth //

Now it was the ,liberal / unbe'lieving ,Sad-
ducees in today's Gospel / who came 'forward to
con'front Jesus / in the 'hope winning their ,point
/ and e'stablishing their re'jection of be'lief in the
resurr'ection of indi'viduals // They pre'sent a
fic'titious ,story / to demonstrate the ab'surdity of
be'lief in resurr'ection // Their presen'tation of
the point can be 'paraphrased like `this / you
be'lievers talk of a resurr'ection // Well 'what
about the 'old tra'dition ,validated by Moses / that
a 'woman could get re'married after her 'husband
'dies // Su'ppose a 'woman 'did so 'seven times
and `died / 'which one is her ,husband / in the
'general resurr'ection //

'Jesus' 'answer to the 'Sadducees' ob'jection to
resurr,ection was / 'first by a'ttributing it to their
'ignorance // Their 'ignorance caused their 'error
about the resurr'ection and the 'future `state //

Their ,ignorance / disbe,lief / or 'weak belief of
 God's ,power / or om'nipotence / makes them
 de'ny the `truth of resurrection // They ,don't un-
 derstand / that 'God can 'do what He `wills / and
 that His 'power far exc'eeds the power of `nature
 //

Their 'ignorance of the 'scriptures also leads
 them to ,error / re'garding resurr'ection and `fu-
 ture state / for the 'scriptures speak ,plainly / that
 the 'soul is i'mmortal / and there is a'nother life
 after `this // 'Christ rose a'gain according to the
 `scriptures (1 Cor 15:3) / and 'so shall `we //

'Jesus then 'rectifies their mis,take / and co'r-
 rects their gross i,deas / which they had of the re-
 surr'ection and a `future state // They are con'fus-
 ing the con'ditions of ,life / as ,we know it / with
 'life beyond 'death and within the 'love of `God //
 In the resurr,ection / they ,neither marry / 'nor are
 given in `marriage / but are like 'angels in `heaven
 (v. 30) // In our ,present state / 'marriage is `neces-
 sary // But in the resurre,ction / there is 'no o'cca-
 sion for marriage // In ,heaven / where there shall
 be 'no more ,deaths (Rev 21:4) / there 'need be no
 more `births //

It is like the ,state / 'angels are 'now in `heaven
 // 'Man in his cre'ation was ,made / a little 'lower
 than the `angels / (Ps 8:5) / but in his com'plete re'-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

demption and reno,vation / will be ,as the angels /
'pure and ,spiritual / 'knowing and ,loving / ever
'praising God ,like them / and `with them // We
'should therefore de'sire and en'deavour to do the
,will of God / as the 'angels do it in `heaven / be-
cause we 'hope 'shortly to be ,like the angels / who
'always be'hold our 'Father's `face //

'Then Jesus finds a 'very 'solid 'argument for
the resurr'ection of ,body / in the 'writings of
,Moses / where ,God said / I 'am the 'God of ,Abra-
ham / the God of ,Isaac / and the God of `Jacob (v.
32) // When the immor'tality of the 'soul is e,stab-
lished / what 'follows is the resurr'ection of the
,body / to be u'nited with the `soul // This is
,proved / by con'sidering the ,time / when 'God
spoke these 'words in 'verse 3`2 // It was to 'Moses
at the `bush / 'long after ,Abraham / ,Isaac / and
'Jacob were 'dead and `buried / and 'yet God did
not ,say / I ,was / or have `been / but I 'am the 'God
of `Abraham // This ,shows / God is `not the God
of the ,dead / but of the `living // This 'proves not
'only the immor'tality of the 'soul in a state of
,bliss / but 'also by 'consequence and ,inference /
the resurr'ection of the `body //

Now we are are 'told of the re'sult of the
dis'pute with the `Sadducees / they were 'silenced
(v. 34) and 'so put to `shame // And the ,crowd / on

the ,other hand / on 'hearing Jesus ,argument /
 were a'stounded at His `teaching // May be be-
 cause 'Jesus' argument was `new to them / in the
 'sense that it had ,in it / 'something very 'good and
 `great //

`Yes / we 'too are very much en,couraged / to
 'hear Jesus' 'argument for the resurr'ection after
 ,death / and the immor'tality of the `soul // The
 con'ditions of ,life / 'applicable to our 'life here on
 ,earth / are 'not to be applied to our 'life beyond
 `death // Be,yond death / we enter into the 'mys-
 tery of God's 'life and love that is e`ternal // The
 con'tinuing life of ,Abraham / 'Isaac and ,Jacob / is
 em'bodied in the on'going 'life of the `people of
 God // Let's 'dwell and go a'head in the 'gentle
 ,confidence / that 'God has ,hold of us / in 'all the
 situ'ations of our 'life here on ,earth / and that 'not
 even 'death can `break that hold //

Mt 22:33–43



Therefore I tell ,you / the 'kingdom of 'God will be taken a ,way from you / and given to a 'people that pro'duces the `fruits of the kingdom // (v. 43)



This ,Sunday / we con'tinue to 'meditate on the 'final 'parables on the ,kingdom / in the 'gospel of `Mathew // The 'parable of 'Two ,Sons / that we had our re'flection on ,last Sunday / was 'aimed pri'marily at the 'leaders of the `Jewish nation // It is the 'parable of the ,vineyard / that is pre'sented for our 'meditative re'flection today // This 'parable told 'also in 'Mk ,12 / '1–,12 / and 'Lk ,20 / '9–1,9 / is 'aimed at the `nation itself //

The parable is 'also known as the 'parable of 'murderous `tenants // The 'name is `accurate / not 'only because we have the 'murder of the 'landowner's `son // The 'parable deals with a ,vineyard / which has 'not given any `fruit // The 'people in ,charge of it / the `tenants / react 'violently to the 'owner's ,messengers / 'sent to collect the `fruit of their work (v. 35) //

'What are the `fruits in question // This is a 'key ,question / for the `meaning of the text // The

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'passage of I,saiah / which is pre'sented in today's
,First Reading / will 'help us give an a'ppropriate
'answer // In this 'song of the ,vineyard / Isaiah
,tells us / that from 'what had been ,planted / (that
is to say 'Israel) / the 'Lord ex'pected 'justice / but
'saw 'bloodshed / 'righteousness / but heard a 'cry
(Is 5:7) // The e'stablishment of 'justice and
,righteousness / is one 'God's 'major ,mandates / in
the Old 'Testament // In a,ddition / this is a 'way
of expressing fi'delity to the ,covenant / be'tween
'God and his 'people // The God of 'life and 'love
wants 'justice to 'rule in the midst of his 'people /
and he wants the 'rights of ,everyone / e'specially
the 'poorest / to be re'spected // 'These are the
,fruits / that the ,vineyard / which the Lord
'planted and 'cared for should have pro'duced //

The 'essence of the 'parable we are considering
is 'this / the 'tenants have 'not practised 'justice /
and they have 'not established 'righteousness //
,Worse yet / they have committed 'murders / and
there are com'plaints about their mis'treatments
and ex'tortions // In the ,Bible / o'ppression of the
,poor / is 'frequently presented as 'homicide //
Therefore it is not sur,prising / that the 'tenants
re'act to 'those sent by the ,Lord / with the 'same
con'tempt for 'other people's ,lives / 'as they show
in their 'daily be'haviour // Thus the 'tenants are

not 'only ,murderers / be'cause they kill the ,mes-
sengers / or 'even the `son / but because they
'despoil and 'violate their `rights // They are
'murderes from the 'moment they 'fail to produce
the 'fruits of ,justice / which the `Lord requires //

When Jesus 'asked his ,enemies / 'what the
'owner of the vineyard would 'do to the ,murderes
they replied / He will 'put those 'wretches to a
miserable ,death / and 'lease the 'vineyard to
,other tenants / who will give him the 'produce at
the `harvest time // They 'knew Jesus was 'talking
a`bout them / but they re'fused to `change //

Dear 'brothers and 'sisters in Jesus ,Christ / it's
'time to 'bring ourselves into the ,picture / and
'ask ourselves ,also / if there is 'not some kind of
com'plicity with the 'murderous ,tenants / in our
'daily `lives //

'Both Reading '1 and the ,gospel today / are
about ,vineyards / whose 'vines bring forth ,grapes
/ which in turn are made into `wine // But it
should 'not be too 'difficult for us to ,gasp / that
what 'both I'saiah and 'Jesus are talkijng about is
`people / the ,people of God / the house of ,Israel /
in I'saiah's time / the house of ,Israel / as it e'xisted
at the time of `Jesus // And there is 'also a 'definite
appli'cation to the 'people of God ,now / the
`Church

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Does this 'parable have any appli'cation to ,us /
'modern ,Catholics / and to our ,Church today //
What 'role does the e'stablishment of 'justice and
'righteousness play for us // Does it make us 'vul-
nerable to ,God // 'What are our 'fruits // The
'answer to these 'questions may be found in
to'day's Alle,lua verse /

I have 'chosen you from the ,world says the
Lord / to go and bear 'fruit that will 'last

Father 'Carr writes in 'Sunday ,Missal Service /
(Quincy / III) / It does 'precious little 'good to
'prove theo,logically / that the 'Catholic Church is
the ,true Church of Christ / when the 'lives of
Catholics 'don't show 'good 'fruit // We can 'prove
the 'Church is 'true in 'doctrine / but if the 'lives
of Catholics don't show 'forth the 'love of Christ
and ,Zeal for God / his con'cern for 'justice and
,righeousness / 'then we are fighting a 'losing
'battle //

'Now we can ,ask ourselves / are 'we as a
'Church ful'filling our obli,gatious today // What
'kind of 'harvest are we bringing forth //

The Church ,is / or 'ought to ,be / a 'sacrament
of God's 'love to the 'whole 'world / and 'each of
us is a 'sacrament as 'well // A few 'chapters ,later /
the 'gospel of Mathew will ,tell us / that 'failing to
,feed the poor / is the 'same as de'nying 'Christ

himself / which means con'demning the 'poor and
 'Christ to `death // Being ,Christian / is pre'cisely
 the `opposite / it is giving `life // 'This is what the
 gospel re`quires / and 'if we put it into ,practice /
 as St 'Paul writes to the Phi,lippians / the 'God of
 'peace will be `with us (Phil 4:6–9) //

'Prayer

*Lord ,God / I 'know that I have been un'faithful to my
 ,calling / and ne'glectful of my `duty // ,Lord / give me
 'new ,strength / to ,labour for you / feet / 'swift to ,fol-
 low / ,hands / 'ready for ,service / ,heart / 'hungering
 for your 'justice and `righteousness / so that I may pro'-
 duce good 'fruit for your ,glory / and the 'benefit of your
 `people // A`men //*

Mt 22:41–46



'What do you 'think of the Mes'ssiah // (v. 42)



To'day's Gospel 'passage presents 'Jesus proposing a 'question to the ,Pharisees / when they were in con,federacy / and con-sulting a`gainst him // As we 'see in the ,gospels / it was 'often the ,Pharisees / who 'asked Jesus ,questions / to 'trap him in ,words / and thus 'make him look 'small in the 'eyes of ,people / who 'followed him in 'large `numbers //

Now 'Jesus probably ,thought / 'he should ask the ,Pharisees / his `enemies / a 'question perhaps to `baffle them // `Yes / 'that's 'God often ,does / when His 'enemies 'most `strengthen themselves / He 'gives them all the ad'vantages they can ,wish for / and 'yet `conquers them //

The 'question now ,Jesus put to them was / 'what do you 'think of the Me'ssiah // Whose `son is he // The 'answer to this 'question was 'one they were 'very fa'miliar with / The 'son of `David / because the 'question and its 'answer had found a 'place in their 'own `catechism // Be,sides / the 'answer the 'son of `David / was the 'common phrase,ology / or pe'riphrasis of the Me,ssiah /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

that the 'people of the 'time had been ex'pecting
to a'rrive // But 'then there came the 'challenging
part of Jesus's ,question / with the quo'tation from
'Ps '1,10 / ,1 that says / The 'LORD says to my ,Lord
/ 'Sit at my ,right hand / until I make your
'enemies your `footstool //

It may be ,noted / that the 'whole 'psalm of
'1,10 / according to Scripture ,scholars / is a 'royal
'song / pre'sumably 'used on the o'ccasion of the
coro'nation of King `David // When he 'conquered
Je,rusalem / we are `told / he 'sat on the 'throne of
Mel,chizedek / and in'herited the 'priestly `king-
ship // 'God gave him 'power and pro'tection //

'David's under'standing of the 'dignity of the
,priest-king / was an anticipation of 'Christ the
'perfect ,king / 'priest and ,judge / who holds
do'minion over 'all the `world // He will 'really be
the 'ultimate ,king / who will put 'all his 'enemies
under his `feet //

When the 'Pharisees came 'out with their
'quick ,answer / the 'son of `David / to Jesus' ,ques-
tion / 'What do you 'think of the Me'ssiah / Jesus
'started a 'difficulty upon their ,answer / and raised
his ob,jection to it / in the light of ,Psalm '11,0:,1/
that it is ab'surd for a ,man / here `David / to 'call
his 'own ,son / `Lord // And we are 'told in the
,gospel / that 'no one 'present over ,there / was

'able to give an 'answer to his argu'mentative
'question //

The ina'bility of 'Jesus's 'enemies in this re,gard
/ can be a'ttributed to their 'ignorance / in the
'sense that their 'knowledge of the Me,ssiah / was
'limited to what was 'said in their 'law and 'catech-
ism // Be'cause they were so 'full of the ,law / they
could not under'stand the Me'ssiah or ,Christ /
'based on the promise of ,Yahweh / or Je'hovah //
In ,fact / the 'whole of P'salm '1,10 / is a pro'phet-
ical 'summary of the 'doctrine of 'Christ /
de'scribing him 'executing the 'offices of a
,Prophet / ,Priest / and 'King // With 'this meaning
of the 'Psalm in our ,mind / we can 'easily ,say /
that what 'David 'meant by the word the 'LORD in
the Psalm v. 'I was 'Yahweh / or Je'hovah / and 'my
,Lord / was the Me,ssiah / or 'Christ // Thus 'Christ
'as (son of) ,God / was 'David's 'Lord / and ,Christ /
'as (son of) ,Man / was 'David's 'son // 'This of
course 'Jesus did not 'then himself ex'plain / but
re,served it / till the 'proof it was com'pleted by his
resurr'ection //

The ina'bility of 'Pharisees to 'give Jesus an ,an-
swer / can 'also be con,sidered / as 'due to their
im'piety and 'pride / in the 'sense that they would
not 'own the Me'ssiah to be 'God / the 'truth which
a'lone would serve as the ,key / to un'lock the 'difi-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

culty raised by 'Jesus upon their ,answer / the 'son of 'David // Their im'piety and ,pride / 'made them become 'silent / re'sulting in their un'will-ingness to 'ask him any more 'questions there'after // They were probably con'vinced of the ,truth / under'lying Jesus 'question and ob'jec-tion based on 'Ps '11,0 / 'I inte'llectually / but were 'not con'verted in their 'heart to the 'truth that Je-sus 'was / that is be'sides being 'David's ,son / 'as Son of ,Man / 'Jesus was 'David's ,Lord / 'as Son of ,God / who would 'sit at the 'right hand of ,God / 'after his resurr,ection / in po'ssession of su'preme 'honour and 'soverign 'power / sub'duing his ,en-emies / till they would 'all be made 'either his ,friends / 'or his 'footstool //

'Prayer

'Lord ,God / to'day we 'celebrate the 'feast of your son ,Jesus / 'Christ the 'King // He 'conquered all his ,en-emies / through his ,suffereing / ,death / and resurr,ec-tion // 'Grant that all 'people in 'every 'place and ,na-tion / 'recognize his ,power / 'welcome his ,rule / and sub'mit to him in 'loving 'self-sur-render // May his ,enemies / 'all 'forces of 'sin and ,evil / 'suffering and ,death / be de'feated / and may the 'peace and ,justice he brings / pre'vail all 'over the 'world // 'Bless and 'guide 'all our 'earthly 'rulers and ,leaders / that they may 'fol-

*low the path of ,truth / ,justice / 'goodness and ,love /
and de'fend their ,people / from 'all the co'rrupting
forces of 'evil and in`justice // A`men //*

Mt 23:29



'Woe to you / 'scribes and ,Pharisees / 'hypocrites
// (Mt 23:29)



In Jesus' ,times / 'scribes and 'Pharisees were the re'ligious 'leaders of the `nation // In the ,gospels / we come across ,Jesus / 'using very 'harsh ,words / against 'these 'two groups of `men // `Why // The 'reason is in his 'very salu,tation to them / hy`pocrisy //

Hy'pocrisy re'sults from de'liberate 'efforts to de,ceive God / one's ,fellow-men / and one'self // 'Scribes and ,Pharisees / were hypo'critical show-'offs to the `core // To all ex'ternal a,pppearance / they were `walking saints / but ,inwardly / they were 'full of de'ception and i`dolatry // Their 'strict ob'servance of the 'letter and forms of the ,Law / and the Tra,ditions / was 'cover-up for a ,line / that was not at 'all in line with the 'Law and its `Spirit //

Jesus 'never used 'harsh ,language / in his 'talk to ,sinners / ,publicans / and the common `people // `Why // The 'reason is their 'openness and re`pentance // 'Jesus is more under'standing of sins co,mmitted / in 'moments of human ,weak-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

ness / than 'those re'sulting from hy'procrisy //
'Never does he con'demn sins of the ,flesh / as
'harshly and ,violently / as he did the hy'pocrisy of
'scribes and 'Pharisees //

Jesus him'self was the most 'genuinely re'li-
gious man that 'ever 'lived // But he very 'much
de'tested re'ligious pre'tence // Hence his in'vect-
ives against 'Scribes and 'Pharisees //

Those 'Pharisees and ,Scribes / did not 'die in
the gene'ration of Jesus' times // Through 'all the
,centuries / the 'church has been 'cursed with
,leaders / e'xactly de'scribed in the 2³rd chapter of
'Mathew's gospel / irre,ligious / pro'fessional re'li-
gionists / pa'radring themselves in holy 'garments /
'pompous fellows / self-im,portant / 'strutting
around like ,lords / pretending re'ligion / 'yet hav-
ing 'no religious 'faith //

'Now coming to our,selves / how 'often do 'we
appear hypo,critical / in our 'attitude and be'ha-
viour // We lose ,peace / and live in an,xiety / due
to 'loss of peace //

'How much 'better and sal,vific it is / to admit
our ,mistakes / to ask for'giveness for our o,ffences
/ and 'thus be 'healed // We need 'healing and
for,giveness / from our 'fellow-men and from
'Christ // But 'only honest ,openness / and sincere
re'pentance can we ex'pect to re'ceive it //

Prayer

*Lord ,Jesus / we ask you 'mercy and for`giveness // We
for`give those who have o`ffended us // 'Heal us of all
dis,honesty / and the re`sulting an'xiety and 'loss of
`peace // A`men //*

Mt 24:35



'Heaven and 'earth will pass a`way / but my 'words
will `not pass away // (v. 35)



Quoting from the prophet I,saiah (Isa 40:8)
/ St 'Peter re'membered these 'words of
'Jesus in his pastoral ,letter / The grass
,withers and the 'flower `falls / but the 'word of the
'Lord en'dures for`ever (1 Pet 1:25) //

The ,constancy of God / his com'plete 'faithful-
ness and steadfast ,truth / is 'emphasized through-
out the `Bible // The Bible ,carries / God's reve'la-
tion of him'self through the `ages // 'God's revela-
tion of him'self / reaches its culmi,nation / in
'Christ Jesus his 'only `Son // God 'wants us his
,people / to 'know of his 'own being and ,nature /
of the 'perfect reve'lation in ,Christ / and of the
'way of life we should ,follow / `through the Bible /
par'ticularly the ,gospels / 'given to us through the
'medium of those 'chosen to re'cord his `Word //

God's 'word is 'fully re'vealed in ,Christ / who is
the 'perfect and com'plete revelation of `God //

The cen'trality of God's reve,lation / and the 'truth
of its ,teaching / is to be found in the `Gospels /
and 'no other 'doctrine can super`sede it //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

The 'word of 'Christ as laid ,down in the gos-
pels / is more 'sure and 'lasting than 'heaven and
'earth // We should build 'up our 'life on ,earth /
with 'more a'ssurance upon the 'word of Christ as
found in the ,gospels / than upon the 'pillars of
,heaven / or the 'strong foun'dations of the 'earth /
,for / when 'they shall be no ,more / the 'word of
'Christ will re'main // 'Every word of 'Christ is
very 'pure / and 'therefore very 'sure // It 'will be
fulfilled for ,sure / in ,God's time / and in 'God's
way / what'ever may 'happen to the 'world //

Mt 25:31–46



'Truly I ,tell you / 'just as you 'did it to one of the
,least of these / who are `members of my ,family /
you 'did it to `me // (Mt 25:40)



Taken from the 'Final ,Judgement scene
/ depicted in ,Mathew's gospel / chapter
2,5 / 31–4,6 / this 'verse is one of the
pro,nouncements / made by the E'ternal 'Judge
our 'Lord Jesus `Christ // Through ,this verdict /
the Lord in'vites us his ,followers / to 'see his hu'-
manity in the 'men and women a`round us / and
to 'use our oppor'tunities for com'passion in our
life situ,tations / and to ne'glect 'none of his 'least
ones who `cry to him // Unless we ack'nowledge
his `presence in hu,manity / and 'treat all 'men
and women with re,spect / and conside'ration for
their ,needs / our 'worship of 'Christ as 'Lord and
'King is 'flawed and `faulty //

When 'Jesus was 'born in 'Bethlehem of Ju,dea
/ 'wise men from the 'East came to Je,rusalem / in
'search of the 'child who was born `king of the
Jews // When at 'last they 'found him at the
,manger / they 'noticed 'nothing `kingly about him
// 'Still they were over'whelmed with `joy / and we

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

are 'told / they knelt 'down and paid him ,homage
/ and 'offered him gifts of ,gold / ,frankincense /
and `myrrh //

During his ,public life / 'never did Jesus 'call
himself ,King / or 'Son of `God / but Son of `Man
// He 'went about doing 'good to ,people / in the
'whole of the ,countryside / 'healing the ,sick /
suffering from 'ailments of 'body and `mind //

Once Jesus ,said / his 'real 'brother and 'sister and
,mother are the ones / who do the 'will of his
'Father in heaven //

He was for the 'emptying of
his di,vinity / for the ele'vation of `humankind //

With 'this end in ,view / he 'gave us sacra,mentally
/ his 'body and 'blood as our 'food and ,drink / in
our 'spiritual 'journey to `heaven //

'He however 'during his ,Passion / a'sserted and
a'ffirmed his divine 'Sonship and 'spiritual ,King-
ship / before 'Pilate the ,Governor / and 'Herod
the `King //

But on the 'way to 'Calvary for
cruci,fixion / he 'proved himself a 'lover of
hu,manity / to con'sole the 'women ,wailing for
him / and on the ,cross / as a 'caring 'member of a
,family / to 'give his ,mother / to the 'care of `John
/ and `John to the care of his `mother / and to ,cap
it all / on the 'cross he for'gave his ,enemies / be'-
fore breathing his `last //

Now in presen'tation of the 'Final ,Judgement
 scene / 'given us as to'day's gospel 'passage for
 re,flection / 'Jesus is a'gain Son of ,Man / but 'One
 coming in 'all his ,glory / in the 'company of his
 ,angels / to sit 'on the 'throne of his ,glory / to pass
 the 'Final ,Judgement / which 'also re'veals his
 'love for hu`manity / 'Truly I ,tell you / 'just as you
 'did it to one of the ,least of these / who are `mem-
 bers of my ,family / you 'did it to `me //

'Mark's ' Gospel

Mk 7:1-13



Do not re,ject the word of God / to `keep your tra-
dition //



The 'English word tra,dition / derives from the 'supine form of the 'Latin verb `traditum / of which 'one meaning is handed ,down / as a kind of in'heritance to po'sterity / and the 'word used in the sacred 'verse quoted a,bove / carries `this meaning //

The co'mmandment of 'God or the ,Word of God / is the 'source of 'life and `health // The co'mmandments of God are un`changing // ,Jesus said / 'Heaven and `earth will pass away / but my 'words will `not pass away (Lk 21:33) // For 'truly I ,tell you until / 'heaven and 'earth pass a,way / not one 'letter not one ,stroke of a letter / will 'pass from the ,law / until 'all is a`ccomplished (Mt 5:18) //

To 'keep the co'mmandments of God ,faith-fully / and remain 'open to 'insights inspired by the Holy 'Spirit in the 'past and in the ,present / proves to be a 'challenging 'duty for 'all `Christians //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Genuine tra,dition / is the re'sult of 'knowing and 'living the ,Word of God / in the 'context of the `times // To a'bandon the commandment of ,God / and 'hold to ,human tradition / is as 'good as re'jecting the ,source of life / and re'lying on a ,stream / disco`nnected from the source / which is 'dangerous in`deed // `Dangerous / because the ,stream / when ,isolated from the source / be`comes po`lluted / and you ,drink from it / and make ,others drink from it / if you 'are in some au'thority over `people //

'Probably you 'have your own 'interests in `doing so / like re'maining in your own au'thority / and making' 'others in subju'gation by your ,power / not 'letting 'God come into the `picture // In'dulging in such ,practices / you end 'up in self-de'ception and deception of `others / you get self-com'placent about 'honouring 'God with your ,lips / with your 'heart being `far from Him //

Your ob'servance of the tra'dition wi'thout God-ex,perience / may end 'up in your 'fall from God's ,grace / and lead 'you and ,others / to super'-ficial and super'stitious observances of some 'rituals and `practices //

Tra'dition held 'on to without God-ex,perience / is like banana 'peel without `flesh // If you ,step on it / you may `slip on it //

But 'genuine tra'ditions are 'carriers of God-ex,perience of people / 'passed on to po'sterity // If ob'served with a'wareness of God's 'graceful ,presence in them / your 'own God-ex'perience in the 'present becomes en'riched / as the 'Spirit of God at 'work in the 'past and the ,present / is the 'same //

'Obstinacy and ob'session with tradition may be ex'pressed in the ,church / in terms of theo'logical ,thought / li'turgical ,worship / and ob'servance of 'rituals giving 'rise to 'waste of ,time / and dis'turbance of 'peace //

Your 'worship of God 'should be from the to'tality of your 'being / 'not being just a 'physical or me'chanical ,exercise / with 'no a'wareness of the Di'vine or God-ex'perience // 'Only when you put 'in your 'will and ,love (,heart) into / it 'proves to be a 'total re'sponse to God's 'will and 'Grace // 'True / you may not be ,able / to ex'plain God's 'will and ,Grace (gra'tuitous ,love) / in terms of your in'telligences // But when you su'rrender your'self to ,His will and Grace / in terms of your 'will and ,love (,heart) / as ,Mary / the 'Mother of God did when she ,said / Let Thy 'will be 'done into me / you become ac'ceptable to ,Him / so as to be 'called His 'sons and 'daughters //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Only o'bedience to God's 'will and ,Grace / will
make your 'worship `total / drawing your 'heart
,closer to Him / and in 'Him to `others // And
'such love and worship with your ,heart / is
de'scribed thus by ,Blake / 'Love 'seeks not it'self
to ,please / nor for it'self has any `care / but for
a'nother gives its ,ease / and 'builds a 'heaven in
'Hell's de'spair //

Mk 7:1–13



You abandon the co'mmandment of ,God / and
hold to `human tradition // (v. 8)



Being so 'afraid and 'jealous of 'Jesus' popularity / the 'Pharisees were 'constantly trying to find 'fault with 'Jesus and His `actions // In to'day's gospel ,passage / it is the question of cere,monial washing / be'fore eating `meals // Some of the di'sciples of Jesus had o'mitted this unim`portant ceremony / and i'mmediately the Pharisees took ,note of it / and con`fronted Jesus with it / as 'if it were a `terrible omission //

And in the confron'tation that follows between 'Jesus and the ,Pharisees / we see Jesus 'criticizing his 'enemies for their over con'cern for their ,human traditions / to the ne'glect of the co,mmandments / e'nunciated in the `Scriptures // In ,other words / what we 'see in Jesus' ,controversy with the Pharisees is / the oppo'sition between a ,formal / ex'terior re,ligion / and the ,real / in'terior de'mands of the `kingdom of God // The di'sciples have started to 'free themselves from 'those religious `precepts / and the 'Pharisees take ad'vant-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

age of this oppor,tunity / to 'situate Jesus out'side
of what 'they consider the tra'dition of his people
// The Lord re'sponds pre,cisely / by re'lying on
tra,dition / the au,thentic tradition / repre'sented
by the prophet I'saiah // Jesus ,said / You have a
'fine way of re,jecting the commandment of God /
in order to `keep your tradition // 'Quoting Isaiah
a,gainst them he said / This people 'honours me
with their `lips / but their 'hearts are `far from me
/ in ,vain do they worship me / teaching `human
precepts as doctrines //

Thus Jesus 'situates himself in the 'great
pro'phetic per'spective / what 'God wants is con-
'version of the ,heart / rather than ,words / and
'purely 'formal `attitudes // The de,mands of these
attitudes / do 'not come from `God / they have
been in,vented / to a'void the `real demands / (vv.
7-8) for e,xample / the demand of su'pporting
one's ,parents / e'specially when they get 'sick and
`old //

This a'ppeal and accu'sation of the Lord is 'still
fully `valid // The 'gospels indicate ,Pharisaism /
as a 'risk for 'every be'liever // We 'also see it
a,mong us / and wi`thin ourselves // 'One way to
water ,down the gospel is / to trans'form it into a
'series of 'formal ,rules / which need to be
ob'served ex`ternally // Those who ,do that / or

,try to do it / look with con'tempt at ,those / who in 'their ,judgment / do not com'ply with these rules // Often the 'poor con'sider themselves 'sinners / because they 'live in a 'complex and con'fused ,world / without being 'able to ,follow / what Jesus calls ,human precepts / in agreement with I'saiah //

It may here be ,noted / that the co'mmandments of God are un'changing // To keep them ,faithfully / and remain 'open to 'fresh ,insights / is our ,difficult / but e'ssential 'duty //

The accu'sation of Jesus against the ,Pharisees / that you abandon the co,mmandment of God / and hold to 'human tradition (v. 8) has been made 'through the 'ages / most 'often between 'Christians of 'different denomi,nations / who a'ccuse each 'other of co'rrupting the ,pure gospel / by 'new 'doctrines and 'practices // The 'only 'answer must be to seek the 'guidance of the 'Holy 'Spirit // For the sake of ,unity / each denomi'nation needs to 'look con,tinually at itself / and de'terminate what ,true tradition / and what is 'later choice // But it is 'not a 'matter to be left to the Church 'leaders // The 'stern ,words of our Lord / are ,also addressed to us / for our self-exami'nation and re'pentance // Each 'Christian needs self-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,criticism / to 'know what is 'deeply ,held / and what is only 'personal `preference //

Jesus a'ddressed the 'Pharisees as `fools / 'all because of their hy'pocrisy and di'shonesty //

They were keeping their tra,ditions / 'not of out of 'love of 'God and `neighbours / but to per'petuate their own 'favoured po,sitions / and look 'holy in the eyes of their `fellow Jews //

Be'fore we get too in'dignant at these ,Pharisees / 'let's take a 'look at our`elves //

Are we 'always 'honest with our,selves / with 'God and ,neighbour //

When we 'keep certain co'mmandments or regu,lations / do we keep them be'cause they are 'God's ,will / or 'just to look 'good to ,others / because 'this has its ad,vantages / 'both in our own self 'pride as well as ,socially //

Or are we 'really 'honestly 'interested with 'law of 'love of 'God and ,neighbour / and keep every 'other commandment in such a ,way / and with such an in,tention / that our ,acts / ,words / our 'thoughts are all e'xpressions of our 'Christian ,love //

`Prayer

Al'mighty ,God / your 'word is everlasting / and your 'will is un`changing //

'Help me to keep your ,word / and to perform your ,will / 'never seeking to 'satisfy my own 'interests and self-`glory / but seeking the 'Holy

*,Spirit / to make my 'worship 'pure and unde'fled /
A'men //*

Mk 16:14–20



And he ,said to them / Go into 'all the ,world / and
proclaim the good 'news to the whole cre`ation //
(v. 15)

He was 'taken up into ,heaven / and sat down at
the 'right hand of `God // (v. 19)



This 'week being the 'last of the season of
Resurr,ection / and the week 'just pre'ced-
ing the season of A,postles / the gospel
'passage the 'Church has laid 'down for our re'flec-
tion and medi,tation is / the con'cluding part of
the 'Longer 'Ending of ,Mark's gospel / wherein
the 'Lord Resurr'ected a'ppears to the di,sciples /
before a,scending into heaven / and en'trusts to
them the continu'ation of his sal'vific `mission //

The pre'cise 'authorship of the Longer 'Ending
of Mark's ,gospel / is 'subject to dis'cussion among
'biblical `scholars // `Be that as it ,may / it is a'-
greed upon that it is an 'ancient `text / and a'gain
tra'dition ac,knowledges it / as an in'tegral 'part of
Mark's `gospel //

As 'one of 'three sy'noptic ,gospels (Mathew,
Mark and Luke) / Mark's 'text here is ,found /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

bearing simi'larity with `Mathew's // But 'Mark e's-
tablishes an i'mmediate co,nnection / between the
'mission and the Lord's a'scension (16: 19–20) /
something 'not found in `Mathew / who says
'nothing about the a'scension // The co'nnection
is not acci'dental / it is 'very si'gnificant //

The di'sciples were the ones who kept com-
pany with ,Jesus / through'out his 'public `life //
They took 'part in his 'paschal ,mysteries / and
were `witnesses to them // They who ex'perienced
'Christ the resurr,ected / had their 'eyes `opened //
Therefore the 'Son of ,Man / 'sent from the
'Father for the sal,vation of the world / now hands
'over this 'mission to his be'loved di'sciples / the
'Church // And he ,said to them / Go into 'all the
,world / and proclaim the good 'news to the whole
cre`ation (v. 15) //

'Then comes 'Mark's account of the a,sension
/ which is 'very pre`cise / re'corded just in `one
verse / So then the ,Lord Jesus / after he had
,spoken to them / was 'taken up into ,heaven / and
sat down at the 'right hand of `God (v. 19) // The
ex'pression / in the passive ,voice / was 'taken up
into ,heaven 'indicates that God the 'Father is the
'one at `work // Here,after / Lord 'Jesus will 'not be
'physically 'present with the di'sciples // The
'physical ,absence of the Lord / 'opens up a 'new

`time / the time of the co'mmunity of the
 di'sciples / for the implemen'tation of Jesus' `mis-
 sion by `them // 'This is why the book of the 'Acts
 of the A,postles / 'starts with the a'scension // After
 ,Jesus' ascension / neither the a'postles nor ,we the
 believers / have 'him on ,hand / to 'ask him what
 to 'do at every `moment // They 'will have to
 make their 'own de`cisions // In 'Acts ch ,1 / ,8 / the
 Lord ,says to them / 'You will be my 'witnesses in
 'all Ju'dea and Sa,maria / and to the 'ends of the
 `earth // The co'mmissioning of the di'sciples by
 the 'Lord with the ,words / 'you will be my ,wit-
 nesses / im'plies that it is not e'nough to re'port
 what they 'saw and `heard / they 'also have to
 'know ,how / to ,whom / and `when to do it // 'This
 means in a'ddition to the ex'perience of resurr,ec-
 ted Christ / they 'have to have his'torical 'insight
 and `wisdom // The his'torical 'mission of 'Jesus is
 `over // 'Now it is the a'postles and ,our turn / to
 give 'witness to his resurr`ection // This 'trusted
 co'mmissioning by the Lord 'represents for ,sure /
 a `challenge / a 'call to apo'stolic a`dulthood //

After the 'brief presen'tation of the a,scension /
 'Mark's text ,reads / They went 'out and pro-
 claimed the good 'news `everywhere // The 'trust
 which the ,Lord has placed in them / 'spurs them
 on to the `mission //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

To,day / the Good 'News has reached 'all the 'regions of the `world / but is 'not made a'vailable to `all // Christian co'mmunities e'xist throughout the `world // But the mission of pro'claiming the Good ,News / that the 'Church has re'ceived from Jesus ,through the a,postles / is to be done 'first in the 'lives of `children of the church // By ,follow-ing Jesus / and re'ceiving the 'Spirit and 'zeal of ,Christ the resurrected / 'let's all pro,claim him / and lead a 'life be'fitting the `word of God //

It's 'only with 'constant 'effort and ,patience / that we can have a 'share in the sal'vific 'work of `Christ // ,Therefore / let's pro'claim him through our 'lives and be`lieve in him //

To,day / 'doesn't Christian 'life of 'many get con,fined / 'just to some ex'ternal `things // 'Hasn't Sunday ob'servance de,teriorated / to a 'ritual per`formance // 'Have we yet a'ppropriated the 'fullness of 'Christ's ,gospel // 'Are we being 'led by the ,Spirit of Christ // 'If we take 'pride in the 'per-son of Christ and ,faith in him / 'shouldn't it 'prompt and pro'pel us to bearing ,witness to him / in one ,personal lives / and ac'knowledging him in the 'presence of `others //

Prayer

*Lord ,Jesus Christ / 'risen in 'glory from the ,tomb / and
 'one with the 'Father after a ,scension / 'grant that I shall
 'so 'walk through this ,world / that I 'never lose 'sight of
 the 'world be ,yond / un ,seen / im`penetrable / but the
 'place where your 'people 'truly be`long // For`give my
 'many 'failures in yours ,service / my an ,xiety / my ,fear
 / my `doubt // Let me 'never be ,tray you / by 'setting my
 own 'likes and dis ,likes / before the 'good of all your
 `people // Go be`fore me in this ,life / make me a 'servant
 of your ,word / and 'bring me at 'last to 'live with you
 for`ever // A`men //*

'Luke's ' Gospel

Lk 1:5–25



'How will I 'know that this is `so // For I am an 'old
,man / and my 'wife is getting on in `years // (v. 18)



To'day's gospel 'passage pre'sents the 'angel
of the Lord ,Gabriel / making the a'n-
nouncement to Zecha'riah of the 'birth of
a ,son / through his 'wife E,lizabeth / al'though
they were 'too 'old to have a `child // The 'angel
gives in'structions to Zecha,riah / as to the 'nam-
ing of the child to be ,born / that is `John / and
'then a de'scription of the ,role he would play / as
the 'harbinger of Me,ssiah / whose a'rri'val in ,his-
tory / namely Incar,nation / the e'vent on which
Old 'Testament prophecy con,verged / was `near-
ing // In the 'same gospel passage of the ,day /
'Luke the E'vangelist re'cords as well the re'action
of Zecha'riah the 'saintly old ,priest / to the a'n-
nouncement of the 'birth of a ,son / when 'he and
his 'wife had advanced in `age //

If it is the ,birth of John / the fore'runner of
Messiah that is fore'told in today's gospel ,passage
/ in the 'passage j'ust following it / that is 'Luke ,1 /
2'6–3,8 / we have the 'birth of Me'ssiah foretold by
the 'same angel `Gabriel // 'There the angel makes

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the a'nouncement 'commonly called the An-nunci^ation / to a 'humble and ,virgin woman / ,Mary / who had been en'gaged to a 'man of the house of ,David / 'Joseph by `name //

Now 'think of the 'way the announcement of the 'imminent ,birth of a son / is re'ceived by the ,two / Zecha'riah and `Mary / in the case of Zecha'riah / the a'nouncement is met with anxi`ety / because 'he and his 'wife are advanced in `age // When the same 'angel announced the good 'news of a 'son to ,Mary / she is 'also sur'prised / because she is a 'virgin by `choice //

But 'here is the `difference / in re'ception of the good 'news by Zecha'riah and `Mary // Zecha'riah is to remain ,mute / un'able to ,speak / till the 'birth of his son `John / because he did not be'lieve God's `words // 'Mary however received 'no such `reprimand / for she found 'favour with ,God / for her uncon'ditional 'faith in the ,word of the Lord / co'mmunicated to her by the ,angel / as ex'pressed in ,these words / 'Here am `I / the 'servant of the `Lord / let it 'be with ,me / according to `your word //

The 'first li'turgical season of Annunci^ation and Na'tivity has co'mmenced today // The ,season / as you all v'know / aims 'at leading us 'all to 'Christ the ,Saviour / by pre'senting the his'toric

sal'vific e'vents one by ,one / pertaining to the 'Ad-
 vent of our 'Lord the `Saviour // 'All the salvific
 'plan finding its ful'filment in ,Christ / is being
 mi'raculously ,realized / by over'coming the
 limi'tations of ,nature / ,history / and `man //

'Each of the his'torical e,vents / that 'helped pre-
 pare the 'ground would be ful,filled / and the
 'reign of His 'Kingdom be e,stabli'shed / 'does re-
 veal His un'questionable au'thority and `power //

What'ever else found 'coming in the ,way of it /
 'should give 'way to the ful'filment of `God's will //

That a 'son be born of 'Sarah being 'naturally
 im'possible for ,Abraham / 'God gives the ,prom-
 ise / that 'Abraham will be made the 'father of a
 big ,nation / and that the 'whole of human 'race
 will thereby be `blessed //

Prophet I'saiah de,clares / that 'though the 'Is-
 raelites moved a'way from ,God's way / God in-
 'variably keeps pur'suing His salvific ,plan / un-
 leashing His 'wrath and 'mercy on them by `turns
 //

'Paul the A'postle makes it ,clear / that because
 the 'sacrifices offered in the Old ,Testament /
 could 'not fulfil God's will in ,full / Christ ,Jesus /
 in a'ccordance with ,God's 'will / ,offered himself /
 as a 'perfect and 'permanent `sacrifice //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

In 'today's gospel ,reading / as we have already ,seen / 'Luke the Evangelist na'r rates the mi'racu-
lous 'birth of John the ,Baptist / fore'runner of the
Me,ssiah / and Zecha'riah being made `mute / as
he disbe'lieved God's `word //

What is made 'clear from all those e'vents is
'this / the sal'vific ,plan / that remained 'hidden in
,God / and was ful'filled in ,Christ / is being un'fol-
ded through `history // The 'means by which 'God
,implements it / might be be'yond the 'reach of
'human in'telligence // But re'sistance to 'God's
salvific 'plan invites `punishment / whereas
com,pliance with it / brings sal'vation // From the
'very be'ginning of his Good ,News / 'Luke the
Evangelist ,tells us / 'how we are to re'spond to the
'wonderful `message of God's love / 'trust
com'pletely in the `Lord //

'Now let's e'xamine our `conscience // Are we
con'vinced of God's ,love for us / in 'all ,circum-
stances // 'Are we for ,waiting / until God's 'prom-
ise is ful,filled / before we ,thank Him for it / as
Zecha,riah did // 'He of course 'did come to ,faith
/ and a 'spirit of 'joyful thanks'giving / but 'only
`later / 'probably he 'thought he must 'wait and
,see / what the 'Lord would `do //

In com'plying with God's ,will / Virgin 'Mary is
our `model // She the 'perfect ,daughter / the

'model ,Christian / 'needs no 'proof for God's `love
 // Her 'trust in the 'Lord is un`questioning // Un-
 like Zecha,riah / she 'praised God our ,Saviour /
 before the 'fact of the 'birth of the 'Son of God by
 the 'Holy ,Spirit / `through her / since her 'faith in
 'God's 'infinite ,love / was 'constant and `total //

Therefore 'let's sub'mit ourselves to ,God's will
 / by ac'cepting our own 'weaknesses and limi'ta-
 tions / 'offering ourselves 'fully to ,Him / and
 'praying with the ,Psalmist /

O ,Lord / it is 'you who are my 'portion and
 `cup / it is 'you your'self who 'are my `prize //

The 'lot marked 'out for me is 'my de`light /
 welcome in'deed the 'heritage that 'falls to `me //
 I will 'bless the 'Lord who 'gives me ,counsel / who
 'even at 'night di'rects my `heart //
 I 'keep the 'Lord ever 'in my ,sight /
 since 'he is at my `right hand /
 'I shall stand `firm //

Lk 1:26–56



Then ,Mary said / 'Here am 'I / the 'servant of the
'Lord / let it 'be with ,me / according to `your
word //



To,day / the '8th of De,cember / the 'Cath-
olic 'Church in all de'votion and ,rever-
ence / 'globally 'celebrates the 'Feast of
I'mmaculate Con'ception of 'Mary our `Mother //
It was on ,this date / that in 1'85,4 / Pope Pius IX of
happy ,memory / through his Apo'stolic ,letter /
entitled Ine'ffabilis ,Deus / 'promulgated I'm-
maculate con,ception / as an 'article of 'faith of the
'Catholic ,church / and ,later / on the 'same date in
1'85,8 / our 'Mother herself di'rectly re'vealed to
the ,world / the 'glorious 'truth of I'mmaculate
con,ception / through an appa'rition to
Berna,dette / a village 'girl at ,Lourdes / in `France
// And to'day is that 'beautiful ,date / that brings
,back to us / the 'sweet 'memories of those
hi'storic e'vents // 'During this li'turgical 'season
of Annunci,ation / when we pre'pare ourselves to
'celebrate the Feast of Na,tivity of our Lord / who
came on 'earth from 'Heaven for our sal,vation / it
is 'quite a,ppropriate / that we sit 'back a little

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,while / to 'ponder the gospel 'passage pertaining to 'Blessed Virgin ,Mary / who was 'God's de'liberate ,instrument / in making His Incar,nation / and thereby our sal'vation `possible //

On the o'ccasion when our first 'parents ,sinned / by trans'gressing the co,mmandment of God / He made the 'promise of a `Saviour // Cursing the 'serpent who ,tricked them / God ,said / I will put 'enmity between 'you and the ,woman / and between your 'offspring and `hers / he will 'strike your ,head / and 'you will strike his `heel //

To'day's gospel ,passage / marks the be'ginning of the i'mmediate prepa'ration for the ful'filment of this `promise by God // Scripture 'scholars and theo'logians are of the o,pinion / that the 'woman re,ferred to in the promise / is our Holy `Mother // When the Virgin 'Mary under'stood through the angel ,Gabriel / that 'God had 'chosen her an ,instrument / for the sal'vation of the ,human race / she 'fully com'plied with 'God's holy `will / and su'rrendered herself 'wholly to 'God's sal'vific ,plan by saying / 'Here am `I / the 'servant of the `Lord / let it `be with ,me / according to `your word // It is 'never 'naturally 'possible for a woman to con,ceive / without the 'contact of a 'male human `being // Still / that is 'realized in ,Mary / by 'God's 'infinite `power // For ,her / to 'live was

'God / and 'all her 'hopes were 'pinned on God's
 'promises // There was ,nothing in her / that was
 'not di'vine / because for ,her / 'Jesus the ,Saviour /
 being 'born in her ,womb / by the 'power of the
 Holy ,Spirit / was `everything // 'Deeply 'trusting
 in 'God's infinite ,mercy / fi,delity / 'love and
 ,power / 'we too are ,called upon / to provide 'Je-
 sus for 'others as ,Mary was / by su'rrendering
 ourselves to 'God's holy ,will / in the 'midst of our
 'trials and ,difficulties / both 'physical and `mental
 // If we ,do so / we 'too like ,Mary / come to ac'-
 quire in'terior `beauty //

The 'poor Virgin ,Mary / did not po'ssess any
 ,scholarship / ,wealth or `prowess // Her ,life how-
 ever / re'flected 'holiness and sim`plicity // 'That's
 why the Al'mighty ,God / set a'side the i'llustrious
 and 'wealthy 'ladies of 'Athens and ,Rome / and
 went 'in for His 'humble ,handmaid / to 'be the
 'mother of the Me`siah / and the angel 'Gabriel
 sa,luted her / as 'one 'full of `grace //

'Luke the Evangelist re,cords / that soon 'after
 the Annunci,ation / 'Mary went with ,haste / to the
 'house of Zecha'riah to 'visit her 'relative `Eliza-
 beth // Here we 'witness the 'mutual en'counter of
 'two ,mothers / super'naturally 'favoured with
 'special 'blessings and gifts from 'God the
 Al,mighty / in His sal'vific `plan // Mary's 'ardu-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

ous 'journey was 'meant for giving the 'fruit of sal'vation to John the ,Baptist / 'dwelling in the 'womb of E'lizabeth // Be'lievers who 'live in the ,faith / that God is the all-im'portant 'person in their ,lives / will have the 'same spirit and dispo,sition / with which Mary visited E'lizabeth / ,that is / the de'sire to pre'sent 'Jesus to ,others / through one's life e'xample // 'That is why St Au'gustine once 'said in his 'ecstasy of God-ex,perience / 'All should 'love the ,one God I love / 'all should a'ttain the 'one God I de'sire to // 'Not only ,that / 'filled with ,God's Spirit / 'Mary is 'not con'cerned with her'self // She is heading 'straight for ,ministering to Elizabeth / with a ,heart / 'generous beyond de'scription // So ,also / if we are 'led by the ,Spirit of God / 'selfishness will 'not find a 'place in our 'lives // On the ,contrary / we will 'live and act for ,others / being for'getful of our'selves // Now Fr ,Damien / St Max'mil'ian ,Kolbe / St Mother Te,resa of Kol'katha / pose a `challenge for us in this regard //

Again on 'hearing the greetings of E,lizabeth / Mary is in'spired to 'chant a hymn of ,praise to God / in re'membrance of the ,graces / gra'tuitously showered on her by `Him // She re'calls her own 'nothingness and ,poverty / and 'God's `glory // She 'always had the a'wareness of the supreme

,truth / that 'what she ,was / was 'only due to the
 `grace of God // Offering the 'utmost in her fi,del-
 ity to / and com'pliance with 'God's sal'vific ,plan /
 Mary ac'knowledges her 'humble ,state / 'Surely
 from ,now on / all gene'rations will call me
 `blessed / for the 'Mighty one has done great
 `things for me // We may be given the ,feeling /
 that 'this is sort of self-`praise // But 'Mary is tak-
 ing ,pride / in re'ceiving her God-'given 'graces
 whole`heartedly / and thanks to ,that / she gives
 her `praise to God // We 'too should 'gratefully re'-
 ceive God's ,graces / and 'then express our 'gratit-
 ude to 'Him in re`turn // But ,sadly to say / what
 we ,see around is / that we are 'too ,proud / to
 ad'mit our God-'given 'talents and a`bilities // May
 St 'Paul's 'statement with con,viction / that What I
 ,am / is by the `grace of God / 'ever in`spire us in
 this regard //

Therefore to,day / when we 'joyfully 'celebrate
 the feast of I'mmulate Con'ception of our
 ,Mother / may we be e'nabled by the Al,mighty /
 to 'ever keep ,growing / in the 'fertile soil of ,holi-
 ness / just as our 'Mother did in ,purity / by
 pre'serving without 'fail the ,sanctity / that 'God
 be,stowed on her / on her 'very con`ception / and
 by 'living in 'harmony with the `will of God //
 During 'this li'turgical 'season of Annunci,ation /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

when we pre'pare ourselves for the Feast of
Na,tivity of Jesus / let's 'earnestly 'pray for that
,grace / by 'actively taking 'part in the 'Holy
Qur,bana / which is the ree'nactment of the self-
,sacrifice / that our 'Lord Jesus 'offered on Mount
'Calvary for our sal'vation //

Lk 1:57–66



Her 'neighbours and 'relatives ,heard / that the
'Lord had shown great `mercy to her / and they
re`joiced with her // (v. 58)



We have in to'day's gospel 'passage the
na'rration of the 'birth of John ,Baptist
/ and the i'mmediate re'sponse of
,people concerned / to this extra'ordinary e`vent
// We are ,told / that E'lizabeth brought 'forth a
,son / when the 'time for her to give 'birth had
`come // The birth of a 'son was 'God's ,mercy /
'promised to the old 'priest Zacha'riah by angel
G,abriel / in 'answer to his 'prayers for a long `time
// 'This promise of God's ,mercy / Zacha'riah did
not be'lieve at `first / on the grounds that he was
over'aged to have a `son / but his wife E'lizabeth
did // Thus she conceived a ,child / and gave
'birth to a son // She re'joiced in the great 'mercy
shown to her by the `Lord // Now many 'things
con'tributed to making 'Lord's mercy `great / she
had been long ,barren / was now ,old / but e'spe-
cially to be,lieve / that the 'child should be 'great
in the `sight of the Lord //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

The re'joicing at the Lord's 'mercy to E,liza-
beth / did not 'stay just wi'thin her / 'hearing that
the 'Lord had shown His ,mercy to her / her
'neighbours and all the re'lations of the family
re'joiced with her // This 'joyful re'sponse of
Elizabeth's 'neighbours and relatives to the ,birth
of her son / speaks of their 'pious re,gard to God /
and 'friendliness to Elizabeth // It gives us the
,message as well / that we 'ought to take ,pleasure /
in the pro'sperity of our 'neighbours and ,friends /
and to be 'thankful to God for 'their comforts as
for our 'own //

'Earlier in the 'chapter we saw E,lizabeth /
'praising 'Mary for 'trusting in the Lord // Now
E'lizabeth shows her 'own trust in ,God's word / by
o'pposing the pro'posal by some ,relatives / that
the 'child be called by its ,father's name /
Zecha'riah // They 'probably had in their 'mind to
do 'honour to the father / as he was not 'likely to
have 'another child // But E'lizabeth was for 'call-
ing her child 'John / having 'learned that 'God ap-
pointed 'this to be his name / the 'name Jo,hanan
meant / 'Gracious / because her 'child should 'in-
troduce the 'gospel of ,Christ / in 'whom God's
'grace would shine more 'brightly than 'ever //

Some 'thirty 'years ,later / 'John would be the
fore'runner of the Me,ssiah / a'nouncing the

Good ,News / which was 'greater than any 'earlier
'prophet had `dreamed of //

Zecha'riah had been struck `dumb / because he
had not 'trusted in the Lord's ,message/ con'veyed
to him by angel `Gabriel // But 'now Zecha'riah
o,beys the Lord's word / without hesi'tation //
When 'motioned by the ,relatives / to find out
'what name ,he wanted to give the child / he
'wrote on a writing ,tablet / His 'name `is John //
This re'sponse to God's ,words / 'loosened his
'tongue / and he began to 'speak in `praise of God
//

What we are to 'learn from 'these gospel
e'vents is `this / 'if we are ,God's people / we re'-
ceive His ,promises / with the 'faith and o'bedi-
ence of E'lizabeth and Zecha'riah / we a'ccept
God's ,words / and we re'joice in the 'wisdom of
God's ,plan / and `praise Him // Thus o'bedience
and ,trust in the Lord / get co'nected with re'-
joicing and `praising God // They are the 'right re'-
sponse to 'God in our ,lives / as e'xemplified by
the 'lives of E'lizabeth and Zecha,riah / 'Mary and
,Joseph / the ,shepherds / 'Simeon and `Anna / and
,later / John 'Baptist and `Jesus / 'these are the
'poor of the Lord / the ,holy ones / who are
'empty of 'pride and self-`will / they have opened
the ,way for God / to 'work in their `lives // 'God in

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,turn / 'fills them with the Holy ,Spirit / who
ins'pires them to re'joice and ,praise God / for the
'wonderful `things He does!

`Prayer

*'Heavenly ,Father / we 'thank you for the life e,xamples
/ that you have 'given through the ,gospel / to 'guide us
on ,way / par'ticularly for the 'pattern of ,living /
through your 'Son made 'human for our sal'vation // We
,pray / that you 'fill us with the ,same Spirit / who in-
'spired them to re'joice and ,praise you / in the wake of
their 'faith and o'bedience to `your word // May your
'Spirit 'lead us to bearing ,witness to you / and 'sharing
your 'love for ,all / who are 'born into this `world //*
A`men //

Lk 4:16–22a



The 'Spirit of the 'Lord is u`pon me / because he
has a,nointed me / to bring 'good news to the
`poor // (v. 18 a)



We 'read in the 'gospels by 'Mathew and
'Mark the e,vent / when 'God the
Father Him'self re'vealed to the ,world
/ the di'vine ,sonship of Jesus saying / 'This is my
'son the Be,loved / with 'whom I am well `pleased
// To'days's gospel 'passage for our re'flection and
medi'tation is the ,one / where 'Jesus himself
re,veals to the world / that 'He is the 'Son of God
and ,Saviour / who had been 'prophe'sied about in
the ,scriptures / and 'whom the 'world had been
'waiting for //

'Christ the ,Lord / who de'parted from the
,desert / after over'coming the temp'tations of the
,devil / and 'filled with the 'power of the ,spirit /
'started his 'public ,ministry / 'first in `Galilee //
'There he was well re'ceived by `people / and we
are ,told / that a re'port about Him 'spread
through all the surrounding `country // He 'taught
in their ,synagogues / and was 'praised by `every-
one // But 'when he came to ,Nazareth / his own

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

`native ,place / he 'had to con'front `problems //
'here he is com'pelled to ad'mit the ,truth / that
'no 'prophet is ac'cepted in the prophet's `homet-
own // The oc'casion was when 'Jesus a'rived in a
'synagogue for `prayer // In ,Palestine / 'synagogue
was the 'real 'centre of re'ligious `life // 'There
,then / they had 'only `one temple // But it was
com,pulsory / that 'all the 'towns and ,villages /
with at least 'ten (10) ,families / should have a `syn-
agogue // 'People over there would 'gather to-
gether for ,prayer / in their re'spective `syn-
agogues // 'Offering of 'sacrifice was made 'only in
the `temple // In 'synagogues what 'mainly took
'place was the 'study of `scriptures // There were
'three 'parts for this peda'gogic service / ,First /
ado'ration through `prayer / ,second / 'reading of
the `scriptures / as 'many as '7 people from among
the congre'gation would make this `reading /
,third / pedagogical `talk / there were ,no persons /
'specially a'ppointed for the 'study of scriptures in
the `synagogue // There was ,not even anyone /
par'ticularly a'ppointed for the pedagogical `talk //
The 'president of the 'gathering would in'vite
,anyone / 'he considered 'competent enough to
give the `talk // A,long with the talk / dis'cussion
on it will `also be held // It was because of 'this

procedure ,followed / 'Jesus got the oppor'tunity
to `speak in the synagogue //

In ,those days / 'books were 'not in `use / there-
fore the 'scroll of the prophet I'saiah was 'given to
Jesus to `read // Jesus un,rolled the scroll / and
what he 'found for reading was the 'place in ch '6,1
/ where it was, written / The 'Spirit of the 'Lord is
u`pon me / because he has a,nointed me / to bring
'good news to the `poor // He has 'sent me to pro-
claim re'lease to the ,captive / to let the o'pressed
go ,free / to proclaim the 'year of the 'Lord's `fa-
vour // Having 'read out ,this much / Jesus ,rolled
up the scroll / and gave it `back to the attendant //

Then having taken his ,seat he said / To,day / this
'scripture has been ful'filled in your `hearing //

It was a 'total 'Saviour of ,mankind / that I'saiah
had `prophesied about // The sacred 'scripture
from be'ginning to ,end / pre'sents sal'vific ,his-
tory / as the history of libe`ration // 'Mankind that
became 'slaves to ,sin / following the o,riginal sin /
got 'into the 'grip of such 'evils as di,sease / ,death
/ ,hatred / ,selfishness / exploit`ation and so on //

The O'T 'books na,rrate to us / 'all what 'God ,did /
in 'different ,ages / to 'liberate such a mankind in
di'stress // But we also 'see the ,books in the OT /
giving 'references to a ,Saviour / who was going to
,come / to make the 'total liber'ation of the 'hu-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

man race `possible // 'Here 'Christ the Lord ,testifies / that stands 'he being the ,Son of God / is him'self the ,one / that stands at the 'centre of the sal'vific and 'liberative `enterprise //

It is in our ,knowledge / to what ex'tent Jesus suc'ceeded in ful'filling this ,prophecy / in his 'life on `earth // 'Christ the Lord was a ,man / who 'demonstrated to all ,men / the 'real 'path of liber,ation / by 'travelling all 'through the land of `Palestine // 'He being the incar'nation of all 'values and ,virtues / 'those who ,saw him / had the 'vision of the in'visible `God //

By for'giving ,sins / 'curing di'seases and 'raising the ,dead / Jesus gave 'out true libe`ration to man // He 'strived to cre'ate a new 'earth and a new ,heaven / 'based on 'truth and ,justice / with 'no one a'bused and ,persecuted / by 'weeping with those who ,weep / 'laughing with those who ,laugh / and by 'sacrificing his ,own life / and there'by giving 'life for `others //

Thus 'all ,men / parti'cularly the be'lievers in the Lord are 'called to lead a 'meaningful 'life in this ,world / by holding 'fast to the ,vision of liberation / that the 'Lord gave de,sign to / and 'sacrificed his ,life for it / in order to build 'up a 'better 'world of 'freedom and `justice // 'All 'men are to ,gain the freedom / re'quired for the reali'zation

of this 'new `world // 'This is the kind of ,freedom / the 'Son of God ,won for men / through the 'great 'mystery of Incar`nation // Do we ex'perience 'this ,real freedom // Or are we 'still 'slaves to the 'evils of ,selfishness / 'greed for 'worldly ,riches // The life 'mission of 'every ,Christian / is to co-operate with the cre'ation of the 'new 'earth and ,heaven / the foun'dation of which was 'laid by the `Lord Jesus //

'II Vatican ,Council / in its de'cree on 'Church in the 'modern ,world / has made 'this 'truth very `clear / The 'joys and the ,hopes / the 'griefs and the an'xieties of the 'men of ,this age / e'specially those who are ,poor / or in 'any way a,fflicted / 'these are the 'joys and ,hopes / the griefs and an'xieties of the `followers of Christ // We 'don't have the ,right / to shy a'way from 'wiping the 'tears of those who `weep // We are ,duty bound / to put an 'end to ,poverty / dis,eases / o'ppression and exploi,tation / 'drugs and po'llution //

We ,do know / what 'men are `slaves to / to`day // 'Man is bound by the 'chains of 'selfishness and `ignorance // A 'wall of 'wrong eco,nomic / ,social / po'litical ,interests / is set 'up to 'seperate 'man from `man today // While 'vested 'interests and 'social in,justices / en'large the 'list of ,wants of men / it 'also gives 'rise to more and 'more distress

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

and 'discomfort among ,men / by 'causing ,price
rise / and cre'ating ar'tificial 'scarcity of e'ssential
co'mmodities // It is the burning 'need of to,day /
that 'men be 'rid of these 'shackles of `slavery //

Having de'liberated on 'what we can ,do / to
make 'possible the 'total libe'ration of the human
,race / as en'visioned by ,Christ the Lord / let's
'pledge our 'utmost su'pport and coope'ration to
the ,Lord / in making his 'dream of 'total libe'ra-
tion of men a re`ality //

Lk 4:36



What kind of `utterance is this // For with au'thor-
ity and ,power / he co'mmands the unclean ,spirits
/ and `out they ,come // (Lk 4:36)



Per'fection of 'anything that we consider a
'value can be called au'thority / and the
,exercise of authority / `power // In ,this
sense / 'God is the Su'preme Au'thority / the
'source of all 'values in per'fection //

The 'crowds following 'Jesus in ,Galilee / saw
au'thority and 'power going with his ,words / as
they ob,served / that his 'words were ,powerful
enough / to 'drive out 'demons from de,moniacs /
to 'cure people of their di,seases / of both `body
and ,mind / to for'give their ,sins / and to con'trol
the strong 'forces of ,nature / like 'winds and
'waves in the `sea //

In to'day's gospel ,passage / we have 'Jesus with
au'thority from ,God / and 'power of the Holy
,Spirit / con'fronting an evil 'spirit in a de,moniac
/ in the 'synagogue at Ca'pernaum in `Galilee // To
,show / that the 'Kingdom of God is 'mightier than
that of ,Satan / he re'buked the 'demon 'harassing

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the de'moniatic with these `words / Be `silent / and
come `out of him / which he `did //

We 'feel and ex,perience / the all – per'vasive
presence and 'influence of 'evil and evil 'spirits ,in
us / and a'round the 'world in 'various `forms // To
be 'freed of their po'ssession and ,presence / let's
'pray to God the Father for the ,gift of faith / so as
to be 'worthy of the au'thority and 'power of Jesus
his ,Son / to drive 'out the evil 'spirits at 'work in
the ,children of men / in 'different parts of the
`world //

Lk 6:27–36



But I say to 'you that ,listen / 'love your `enemies /
do 'good to those who `hate you // (v. 27)

'Do to ,others / 'as you would have them do to
`you // (v. 31)

Be ,merciful / just as your `Father is merciful // (v.
36)



To'day's gospel 'passage from ,Luke / can
be called a sort of conden'sation of
'Mathew ch '5 and '7 // And what 'Jesus
says in the gospel 'text for to,day / is 'meant for
uni'versal appli'cation / for they are 'lessons of
universal con'cern / and therefore Jesus starts
,saying / But I say to 'you that `listen // On 'some
such o,ccasions / he would 'also use the ex,pres-
sion / 'He that has an ,ear / let him `hear / and the
in'tended 'meaning of the word 'hear in the ,con-
text / is `listen // When someone ,listens / he/she
'hears with a ,purpose / with an in'tention for ap-
pli'cation //

By 'laying down the ,Golden Rule / 'Do to ,oth-
ers / 'as you would have them do to `you / Jesus

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

has in his 'mind the 'same co,mmand of his as /
'Love your 'neighbour as your`self // To ful,fil this
command / we must put our 'souls into ,others'
stead / and 'then be 'merciful and `helpful to them
/ as we should de'sire and justly ex'pect others to
be 'so to our`selves //

The appli'cation of the Golden 'Rule re,quires /
that we must be 'free in giving to 'others their 'dire
,necessaries / when they are 'not able to `help
themselves / 'Give to everyone who `begs from
you (v. 30) //

The rule ,also requires / that we must be 'gen-
erous in for,giving those / that have 'been any way
in`jurious to us // ,This involves / that we must
'not be ex,treme / in de'manding our ,right / when
it is de`nied us // So don't with'hold even your
,shirt / from 'anyone who takes a'way your `coat //
In ,other words / we should not 'take them by
`throat //

Again we must not be 'rigorous in re'venging a
'wrong when it is `done to us // So If anyone
'strikes you on the ,cheek / offer the `other also //
,That is / we should 'leave it to 'God to ,plead our
cause / and just sit 'down under the a`ffront //

Not `only ,that / we must do 'good to 'them
that do `evil to us // ,That is / we must be 'kind to
'those from whom we have received `injuries //

We must not 'only ,love our enemies / and bear a ,goodwill to them / but we must do `good to them // In reco'mmending this 'difficult ,duty to us / it is repre'sented as a ,generous thing / and an a,ttainment / 'few a`rrive at //

There is 'nothing un'common in loving 'those that `love us / for 'sinners will 'love those that love `them // It is but 'following `nature / and puts no 'force at all u`pon it (v. 32) // A'gain as ,Christ's disciples / we do 'not bring any ,credit / or repu'tation to the ,name of Christ / 'if we do ,good / 'only to 'those that do 'good to `us / because sinners 'also do even the `same // But it be'comes us to 'do something more 'excellent and ,eminent / to 'do that which 'sinners will `not do / and 'that is rendering 'good for `evil / 'then we are to 'God for a 'name and a `praise // 'Similar to 'this are the o,ccasions / when we ,lend / 'hoping for 'nothing a`gain // We must ,lend / though we have 'reason to su,spect / that what we 'lend we `lose / lend to 'those who are so ,poor / that it is not 'probable they will be 'able to pay us a`gain // When we ,do this / it will be re'dound to our `profit / for our re'ward shall be `great // What is 'lent and 'lost on ,earth / from a 'true principle of ,mercy / will be made `up to us // We shall 'not only be re,paid / but re,warded / `greatly rewarded // It will re'-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

dound to our 'honour / for in ,this / we shall
re'semble 'God in His 'goodness and ,mercy /
which is the 'greatest 'glory // We will be 'children
of the Most 'High // It is the ,glory of God / that
he is 'kind to the un'grateful and to the 'evil //
'Therefore he in'fers what is 'said in v. 3,6 / Be
,merciful / just as your 'Father is merciful / and
this is ex'pressed in ,Mathew's gospel as / Be ,per-
fect / as your 'Father is perfect // 'Those that are
'merciful as ,God is merciful / 'even to the 'evil
and the un,grateful / are 'perfect as 'God is perfect
// This should 'strongly en,gage us / to be 'merciful
to our fellow ,beings / not 'only that 'God is 'so to
,them / but He is 'so to 'us / 'though we have 'been
and ,are / 'evil and un'grateful // It is thanks to
,His mercies / that we keep sur'viving His 'justice
and 'judgement //

'Some people tend to ,think / that 'some of Je-
sus' ,teachings / such as 'loving our 'neighbour as
our,self / 'loving our ,enemies / and 'doing to ,oth-
ers / 'as we would that they should do to ,us / are
so 'high above our 'selfish ,nature / that we are in
the habit of ex,cusing ourselves / from even 'try-
ing to live ,up to them / by 'saying to ourselves
that 'Jesus surely 'knew / that he was 'setting be-
fore us im'possible i'deals //

How'ever we ,know / that Jesus him'self lived
 ,up to them / and 'taught une,quivocally / that we
 'must keep our ,hearts / 'free from re'sentment /
 'no matter 'how we may be mis'treated / and not
 'only ,that / but that we should 'actually seek the
 ,welfare / of 'those who seek our 'hurt // 'Not ,pos-
 sible / 'Yes / it ,is / in some 'measure / by the
 'strictest self-,discipline / and by the 'gracious help
 of ,God / 'possible to 'love those who 'hate us //

To 'practise the ,Golden Rule / 'even in ,small
 measure / makes us ,happy / 'helps us in our ,busi-
 ness / and in 'every re'lation of life // It is the most
 'practical thing in this 'world // In 'serving ,others
 / 'we serve our'selves // 'People like to 'deal with
 'those who be,lieve in / and 'practise the Golden
 Rule // So 'let's give it a 'try and 'see //

Lk 8:41b–56



,Daughter / your 'faith has made you `well / go in
`peace // (v. 48)



In to'day's gospel ,reading / we 'find Christ 'Je-
sus being 'welcomed by a Galilean ,crowd /
after he was driven a'way by the `Gadarenes //
'Though the Galileans had re'jected Jesus be,fore /
'this time they ,welcomed Him / with 'all their
'hearts //

In to,day's gospel passage / we find 'two 'mir-
acles inter,woven / as done in 'Mark and ,Mathew
/ and wrought upon 'two `persons of this crowd /
one is a 'synagogue ,leader / `Jairus by ,name /
who came ,up to Christ / did him 'reverence ,pub-
licly / and be'sought him that he would 'come into
his ,house / to 'cure his 'only ,daughter / about 't-
welve years ,old / who was `dying // Though the
,faith of Jairus / was not as 'strong as that of the
cen,turion / who de'sired Christ 'only to speak the
'healing word at a ,distance / Christ Jesus
com'plied with his re,quest / and went a`long with
him //

When 'Christ was ,going / the 'people
'thronged him // Now there was a ,woman in the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

crowd / who made 'secret suppli`cation to Christ
// The woman had been 'suffering from 'haemor-
rhage for 'twelve ,years / which had been con-
'sumption of her body / and the con'sumption of
her `purse too // Not `only ,that // Her di,sease /
according to the 'categories of the ,time / 'signified
im`purity // The 'nature of her disease was ,such /
that she did not 'care to make a 'public com`plaint
of it / and 'therefore she took this oppor'tunity of
'coming to Christ `in a crowd // 'Marginalized for
being a ,woman / for being ,sick / and for being
,poor / she 'humbly a`pproached Jesus / she 'dared
not even `speak to him // But her 'faith was 'very
`strong // Wi,thin herself / she 'felt for ,sure / that
by the 'touch of the ,hem of his garment / she
would be ,cured / without 'his being a`ware of it /
as if she were 'trying to 'steal a `cure from Him //
Her 'plan proved suc`cessful // She 'touched Jesus'
,cloak / and found an i'mmediate 'change for the
'better in her,self / and she re'ceived her `health //
But the re'lationship with the 'Lord must 'always
be `personal // 'Jesus took ,notice / that there was a
,cure wrought / following 'someone touching `him
//

So he ,asked / `who touched me / For I 'noticed
that 'power had gone `out from me // This 'ques-
tion raised by the 'Lord sounded a 'naive one to

the dis`ciples / because with `so `many people pressing ,in / it could have been `anyone // `Jesus of course did not `grudge `power going out of `Him // In `fact it was his de,light / that power was gone `out of Him to do `good to people / and they were as `welcome to it as to the `light and heat of the `sun //

When the `poor patient ,saw / that she could no `longer remain `hidden from the `great phy,sician / she came `forward to ,own her case / and the `benefit she had re`ceived //

But Jesus `knew what he was `doing / and he gave the `woman the oppor`tunity to `leave the ano,nymity / to which she had been con,fined / by the marginali,zation and con`tempt she was en`during // Jesus did not `point her out among the `crowd // She was the one who pre`sented herself ,speaking / in `fear and `trembling // As the Lord `welcomed her as a `person who has ,dignity / she de`clared in the `presence of ,all the people / the why of her action / and the `how of her cure // The `Lord `valued her `faith and her ,courage telling her / ,Daughter / your `faith has made you `well / `go in `peace (v. 48) // What the Lord `meant by ,these words was / `you have done it your,self / by the `trust you placed in `me / now re`ceive `peace // He re`stored her `physical ,health / (she

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

was 'healed) / and her 'place in so'ciety // (she came 'out of her 'marginalized situ'ation) // To have 'faith is to have 'life //

Now while Jesus was 'still speaking with the 'woman cured of her di,sease / there 'came someone bringing 'Jairus the ,tidings / that his ail-ing 'daughter was no 'more / and therefore ad'vised the ,leader / not to give the 'Teacher any further 'trouble about her // 'Jesus however en,couraged Jairus / not to dis'trust the ,power of Christ / 'though his daughter was now ,dead say-ing / Do 'not 'fear // Only be'lieve and she will be 'saved // Were 'we to be in ,Jairus' sandals / some of ,us / in our 'rights-based and de'manding ,cul-ture / might 'feel a bit ,desperate / and even a little ,miffed / as Jesus was di'verted from attending to our 'need // But good ,on Jairus / he be'lieved Je-sus' 'words / and trusted ,Him / who is 'able to bring 'life out of 'death //

The rest of the episode about Jairus' 'daughter deals with 'life // The 'girl had 'just 'died / and the 'matter would have seemed 'closed with 'us // But 'that did not 'stop Jesus // 'Faith is 'greater than 'death / in fact 'faith is 'victory over death // Hence 'Jesus' words to ,Jairus / Do 'not 'fear (v. 50) // In the ,gospel / 'fear is the 'opposite of 'faith // Jesus then does 'not seek the spec'tacular // On

the ,contrary / he wanted to 'minimize the im,portance / of what he was about to ,do / in the midst of the 'mourners around the `dead child // Do not `weep / for she is 'not `dead / but `sleeping //

What Jesus ,meant by this was / as to the pe'culiar case of the ,girl child / she was 'not dead for good and `all / it would be to her ,friends / as 'if she had been but a 'few hours a`sleep // But it is 'applicable to all that die `in the Lord / 'therefore we should not ,sorrow for them / as 'those that have no `hope / because 'death is but a `sleep // This was a 'comfortable ,word / which Christ 'said to those `mourners / yet 'some of them 'wickedly laughed `at him // They 'knew for ,certain / that the 'child was `dead / and 'therefore nothing 'less than a di'vine 'power could re'store her to `life // But 'Jesus put them all `out / they were un'worthy to be the 'witnesses of the `wonder he was going to work // Then he took the 'child by the ,hand / as we would a'wake people out of 'sleep and help `up / and called ,out / ,Child / get `up // She got ,up / and made it a,pppear / that she was a'live by her `motion / as she did 'also by her `appetite // Jesus then su,ggested / that the 'girl be 'given something to `eat //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Sacra'mental Di'mension of the 'Two `Miracles //

These 'two 'miracles narrated in to'day's gospel
'teach us as ,well / 'why our Lord 'Jesus came to
our 'history by His Incar`nation // He wants to
,teach us / that 'as our faith reaches 'up to touch
,Him / His 'power and His 'goodness will reach out
to `touch us //

In His ,lifetime / Jesus came in con'tact with
men of 'faith by His 'physical ,presence / His
,words / His `actions // He 'wished and He
'planned to con,tinue this presence / by 'words
and `actions // In the ,sacraments / Jesus con'tin-
ues to 'touch by 'words and ,actions / as 'often as
we reach 'out to Him with `faith //

Lk 10:25–37



But a Sa¹maritan while travelling came ¹near him /
and when ¹he saw him / he was moved with ¹pity
// (v. 27)



Through the parable of the ¹Good Sa¹maritan / ¹Jesus was projecting the ¹real picture of the ¹Jewish people / who had bee de¹prived of the ¹true ¹Spirit of ¹love of God / and love of ¹fellowmen / as they got en-¹tangled in the ¹intricacies of ¹Laws / contained in their ¹Holy Book of the ¹Torah // We may ¹try as well to under¹stand the ¹background of this parable // The ¹road from Je¹rusalem to ¹Jericho was ¹highly ¹risky and ¹dangerous // When Je¹rusalem is ¹situated at an altitude of ¹23⁰⁰ ft from ¹sea level / the ¹site of Jericho is ¹marked at a de¹scent of ¹1,300 ft / ¹down the sea level / on the ¹shores of the Dead ¹Sea // The ¹distance between these ¹two places comes to ¹20 miles / but the ¹road to travel-¹ling ¹in between them goes to ¹3⁶⁰⁰ ft // So the ¹journey was to be made through ¹such a steep and ¹rocky ¹road // St ¹Jerome / who ¹lived in the 5th century A¹D re¹records / that even in ¹those days / because of the ¹arduous and ¹dangerous ¹journey

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

one had to make through ,that route / it used to be ,called / 'way of `blood // 'Even in the 1,9th century / 'travel through that 'way could be undertaken with 'threat of a`ttacks //

The ,priest / who went 'down that road 'saw the ,man / 'lying on the road half-,dead / following an 'attack by `robbers // He however ig,nored the poor man / and 'passed by on the `other side of the road / pre'sumably because of he was re'minded of what is 'said in the book of ,Numbers / ch 1,9 / 11 // 'Probably he was not ,sure / whether the man was 'dead or `not // Su'pposing he had been `dead / and he `touched the ,body / he would have to stay im'pure for '7 ,days / as per the 'law in 'Torah // In ,that event / he would come to 'lose his turn of 'priestly 'duty in the `temple // So he 'passed by without any 'contact with the dead `body //

The 'Levite as `well passed by // ,Usually / 'bandits would lay 'several ,traps / to prey 'on the `travellers // For ex,ample / 'one of them would play the 'role of one ,injured / and 'lie on the ,road / as one 'nearing `death // 'As and when a 'traveller ventures to ,halt his journey / to a`ttend the one on the ,road / the a'ccomplices of the 'trickster in the 'hideout waiting to ,pounce / would 'rush towards the 'traveller at 'halt and `attack him // The

,Levite in question / being very 'much in the 'know of these ,things / must have given prio,rity / to his own 'safety and se`curity // Above ,all that / if the 'injured 'person happened to be a non-'Jew who was supposed to be a ,gentile / the 'Torah or the Jewish ,Law / did not a'llow him to lend a helping 'hand to the `victim // Now the Sa,maritan / who happened to 'pass by that ,way / as told in the ,parable / was 'one considered to be a `gentile / a `pagan in those times // 'He however gave 'out all the ,help / for the 'victim of the attack by the `robbers // And the 'motive for his spon'taneous and 'generous ,act / is re'corded in the 'NRS'V gos-pel ,text / is `pity // But 'pity is 'too weak a ,word / to ex'press what 'motivated the Sa'maritan for his empa`thetic act // 'Even the word com,passion / found in the 'Authorized version of the Bible / is an a`pology for his motive // 'These words are no ,match / for giving the 'strength and 'depth of the ,Greek word / SPLANKINI`ZOMAI / used in the `Greek text // The 'verb used here in the 'word group in ,Greek / is an in`transitive one / and we are `told / it de'rives from the i'dea of being 'moved in one's 'inward ,parts / one's 'deepest `be-ing // To ,say / it 'really turned him 'over in,side / would come `nearer to it // The Sa'maritan was 'moved to ,action / 'not by the co,mmand of the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Law / 'not by 'social ,conscience / but by a 'gut level 'feeling for a'nother human ,being / who we are told was a 'Jew in di'stress // It did not ,bother him / that there existed hos'tility between 'Jews and Sa,maritans / the re'ligious dis,putes / and the a'voidance of 'personal re'lationships // His ,seeing the man in distress / was followed by ,action / e'mergency ,treatment / and 'money given for 'further `care // His 'action made it ,clear / 'who was the `neighbour / the 'one who was 'near and needed `help // The 'Lord who told the ,parable / often re'acted in the `same way / and the 'same Greek ,word / is 'used of his re'sponse to ,suffering / and 'calls for `healing // It is 'not the 'conscious o'bedience to `duty / but the spon'taneous act of ,love / that most 'closely 'follows the e'xample of `Christ //

The 'parable of the 'Good Sa,maritan / remains one the most su'perb ,classics / on the subject of 'real Christian `love // It may be ,noted / that the 'parable is told in ,Luke's gospel / 'after the evangelist had 'just told about ,Jesus / being re'jected by Sa`maritans (9:52) // And 'see how is 'Jesus' re`action to this / to e'xalt a Sa,maritan / to the 'love of 'all future `ages //

The 'parable brings to our 'mind very ,vividly / what 'real Christian 'love or human `kindness is /

and it con'fronts us as 'well with the ,question / whether 'we too are 'good Sa'maritans to our 'neighbour / the ,aged / the ,sick / and the 'poor on many a `count // Do we 'pass by them ,quickly / as the 'priest and the 'Levite did in the ,parable // If we ,feel / that our 'heart is ,cold / and the 'first 'in-stinct is to pass ,by / our 'will can make us ,turn aside / to 'do what we would rather ig`nore // And our 'acts of 'will often re,peated / will 'lead us at ,last / to 'true acts of `love //

'Prayer

'Lord of ,love / when the 'outward 'sight looks on a'nother's ,need / give the ,inward sight / which 'sees that 'all hu'manity is ,one in Christ / and re'sponds even against 'personal incli'nation and `selfishness // When I 'say that 'everyone is my 'neighbour as a ,child of God / let it 'not be a pious 'word without `feeling / but a ,truth / that 'reaches into the ,depth of being / and 'out into the ,world / where the 'journeys of 'many are 'lonely and `perilous // A`men //

Lk 12:22–34



'Sell your possessions / and give `alms // Make
'purses for yourselves that do not wear `out / an un-
'failing treasure in ,heaven / where no ,thief comes
near / and no 'moth de`stroys // (v. 33)



Christian 'life is 'nothing but an uncon'di-
tional self-su'rrender to the ,hands of God
/ under whose 'providence people 'find
themselves in 'daily `life // Although 'we may find
it ,difficult / to under'stand in the con'finement of
our own limi'tations the de,signs of God / who 'ul-
timately 'aims at only the ,good of man / those
who 'firmly be'lieve in the ,providence of God /
can come u'pon His in'visible ,hands / pro'tecting
them even in situ,ations / quite un'safe and `haz-
ardous //

The 'truths re'vealed through to'day's ,readings
/ serve as 'guidance to the 'modern ,men / 'locked
in the 'way of their 'worldly `progress // In a situ'a-
tion when modern ,men / on their 'onward 'march
towards 'worldly 'wealth and a,chievements / find
their hiking 'boots themselves turning ,stumbling
blocks / 'here are some ,thoughts / that would
render 'meaning to 'life on `earth //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

5. 'Everything takes 'place in the 'infinite 'providence of God //
6. Di'vine ,providence / is 'ultimately 'aimed at the 'good of man //
7. With ,trust in this providence / suc'cess in 'life con'sists / in growing 'rich towards 'God //
8. The 'means of growing 'rich towards 'God is 'love //
- a) 'God in 'Christian per,spective / is 'not a phe,nomenon / 'ruling ,everything under Him / 'keeping Himself a'loof from all in the 'heights of 'heaven / but is the personification of ,love / very 'much the 'WORD become ,flesh / in 'readiness to take 'care of man // God the 'one we ,see here is / a 'God who was 'ready to in,corporate man / into the i'neffable 'circle of His ,love / 'ransoming him for the 'blood of his ,Son / through 'death on the 'cross // 'Only in 'Christian 'faith and ,vision / can we 'see a ,God / om'nipotent and om,niscient / who has even 'numbered in pre,cision / every 'single 'hair on the 'head of man //
- b) It has become a 'fad among some ,people / who in their 'affluence and 'foolishness

blare 'out in ,public / that it is 'folly for
 'people to put their 'trust in the ,goodness
 of God / who keeps 'moving the 'vast and
 'complex 'universe including human `be-
 ings // When we look 'into several e'vents
 like ,tempests / ,cyclones / ,floods / ,wars /
 deadly ,viruses and the like / within the con-
 'finement of our limi,tations / we may also
 be 'tempted to 'ask like 'Job in the Old
 ,Testament // ,God / 'what may the 'meaning
 of your in'scrutable `justice // But if we fol-
 low the e'xample of Job himself / and are
 'ready for an ob'jective a'nalysis of things
 with an 'open ,mind / we'll be 'bound for
 ,sure / to be'lieve in the inex'haustible
 `goodness of God //

- c) 'Real 'glory con'sists in growing ,great /
 through self-`emptying // 'Only 'those
 people can achieve suc'cess in ,life / who
 can con'sider 'spiritual ,values / as su'perior
 to the `worldly ones // Suc'cess of ,this kind
 / may be 'viewed as o'ffence among ,Jews /
 and 'folly among `gentiles // But 'lives of
 'great men ,teach us / 'which side is the 'ul-
 timate `victory on // If we 'now re'member
 Mahatma ,Gandhi / the ,Buddha / and Fr

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,Damien / it's 'not be'cause of their 'worldly
a'chievements // Had it ,been so / they
would have been for'gotten long a'go //
The e'ssential ,quality / 'needed for leading
a suc,cessful life is / 'hope combined with a
'sense of se'curity // 'This we come to
po,ssess / 'only when the con'viction is
'deeply im'printed in our ,soul / that we are
'ever in the 'shelter of God's 'providence //
We can a'chieve suc,cess in life / 'only when
we tran'scend worldly a,chievements / and
'make for ourselves an un'failing ,treasure
in heaven / that does not wear ,out / where
no ,thief comes near / and no 'moth
de'stroys //

- d) For 'one to become 'rich in the ,presence of
God / one's 'life should be 'firmly 'founded
on ,love of God / finding its com'pletion in
the 'love of human 'beings // 'Only by lead-
ing a 'life moving 'out of one's ,self / man
can 'build up a 'life founded on 'love // If it
is 'folly to find ful'filment in 'spiritual ,life /
by 'shunning ,worldliness / it is 'ignorance
to in'dulge in ,worldliness / by ig'nor-ing
'spiritual life // And this 'truth makes us ac'-
cept man 'as he is / and ac'ceptance of ,this

sort / as we all ,know / is the 'norm of 'real
 'love //

If Francis 'Bacon's ,message / that we 'leave the
 'past to God's ,mercy / the 'future to His ,provid-
 ence / and live 'well the 'life in the 'present is to
 light 'up our ,lives / we have to be a'ware not 'only
 of God's 'love and ,providence / but are to 'grow in
 ,love / with an 'open ,mind / and 'learn to 'view
 'facts and e'vents in the ,world / in the 'light of
 e'ternity //

Prayer

'Loving ,God / 'thank you for the 'many pleasant 'things
 in this ,world / which we en'joy as part of your 'love for
 us // But en'lighten us through your ,Spirit / to under-
 'stand that they are not ,permanent / and that if we
 'value them ,too much / and be'gin to ,trust in them / in
 the 'end we shall have 'nothing // Lift 'up our 'hearts
 above the 'frail ,treasures / which 'we may value 'too
 'highly // 'Give us a deeper 'trust in 'your ways that are
 not ,our ways / and 'stronger 'hope in your 'purpose for
 us / 'even when it is be'yond our under,standing / and
 seems to 'turn us aside from the ,path / that our 'own
 de'sire would 'follow / A'men //

Lk 13:22–30



,Lord / will only a 'few be ,saved // He ,said to
them / 'Strive to enter through the `narrow door /
for ,many I tell you / will `try to enter / and will
not be `able //



Sal'vation of ,men / as 'promised by 'God in
the ,Bible / is 'not to be in,terpreted / as
re'stricted to just a `few / it is 'open to
,everyone / 'striving to enter it through the `nar-
row door (v. 24) // To'day's gospel ,passage / be'-
gins with the 'question from one of 'Jesus' ,listen-
ers / ,Lord / will only a 'few be ,saved (v. 23) // The
,word group in the question / a ,few / can be under-
'stood in terms of `numbers / but Jesus is 'not for
taking it `that way // The ,answer given to the
question / 'sounds very `direct / but discon`cert-
ingly challenging / 'Strive to enter through the
`narrow door (v. 24) // And Jesus ,also says / that
not 'everyone is going to make it `through // It
'sounds as if 'Jesus has some rather 'strict `stand-
ards / for he says 'Many will `try to enter / and will
not be `able // The 'last will be ,first / and the 'first
will be `last // The 'reason given for the ina,bility
is / that sal'vation passes through the `narrow door

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

(v. 24) // A 'key to under'stand Jesus' ,answer / is 'found at the be'ginning of the `text itself / re,minating us / that 'Jesus was making his way to Je`rusalem (v. 22) // In the ,gospels / the 'way to Jerusalem ex,presses / Jesus' determi'nation to ful-fil 'faithfully his 'Father's ,mission / to pro'claim and 'practise the good ,news / to its 'ultimate `consequences // The 'listener's 'question and 'Jesus' 'answer take 'place in `that context / on the 'way up to Je`rusalem //

The 'narrow door is 'clearly re`strictive / 'not in reference to ,people / but in terms of the `right to be saved // Sal'vation does ,not come / from a 'mere 'physical `closeness to Jesus (vv. 26-27) // It is not e'nough to have ,eaten / and to have ,drunk with him / or to have 'listened to him in the public `squares // It is not the 'consequence of belonging to a spe'cific `people either / in 'this case the `Jewish people (v. 28) // The `text does not ,say it / but in fi'delity to the ,spirit of Jesus' answer / we could ,add / that sal'vation is not 'limited to ,one race / or `one culture // Sal'vation comes when we ac,cept Jesus / and start to `follow him // 'This is the ,narrow door / the 'only door to `life / and it is a de'manding ,entrance / like the 'discipline as mentioned in the 'letter to `Hebrews / but ,later / it

'yields the peaceful 'fruit of `righteousness (Heb 12:11) //

Thus the 'narrow door becomes a wide `open door / 'open to 'all without ex`clusivism // The 'narrow door or the ,following of Christ / must be 'placed in relation with 'openness to univer,sality / to `all nations // 'All are in,vited / to 'follow the `way of Jesus //

All are in,vited / but the invi,tation means / 'following the `way of Jesus // 'Openness to univer,sality / does not water 'down the `context of the invitation // Hence the 'reference at the ,end of the text / Some are 'last who will be ,first / and some are 'first who will be `last //

So far as 'life on ,earth is concerned / or to all 'practical ,purposes / 'what is a `narrow door like / It is 'nothing but ,discipline / or `obedience // For 'us to attain any 'goal in ,life / or achieve suc'cess in 'any walk of ,life / or de'gree in any branch of 'knowledge or ,skill / we have to 'set ourselves on the `narrow door / that is on a ,lifestyle / that de-mands 'discipline and o`bedience // When it comes to ,family life / 'what is a 'narrow door of 'life like // St 'Paul gives us 'practical `tips in this regard // The apostle says to ,children / O'bey your `parents / and 'Honour your 'father and `mother // (Eph 6:1) // This re'quires on the ,part

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

of the children / hu'mility and ac'ceptance of `dis-
cipline // 'That is `children's narrow door // He
says to ,parents / Do not pro'voke your children to
`anger / but bring them 'up in 'discipline and in'-
struction of the `Lord (v. 4) // This re'quires on the
,part of the parents / un'selfish 'love and `patience
// 'That is `their narrow door // 'Through such
,teachings / the Lord in'vades into our `comfort
zones // He 'tears aside the 'curtain of our super'fi-
cial `lifestyle // If we take 'up his challenge to
'enter by the ,narrow door / we can enter into 'new
'pastures of ,peace / and `happiness //

We 'learn a 'lot from the ,narrow door / from
the e'xample of Jesus // He was 'very 'interested in
His 'Father's ,rules / doing His 'will becoming his
'food and `drink // I 'always do the `will of my
Father // Self-'discipline is the 'way we de'velop
the ,character / to be 'able to 'fit through the ,nar-
row door / that leads to the `kingdom of God //
Those who 'make themselves 'first by ,pride / and
,pushiness / and 'lack of con'trol will be `last / says
the Lord // 'These will get ,stuck / in ma'turing
into a full-'fledged perso'nality / just as some
'plants and ,trees do / not being 'able to bear 'fruit
and `flowers // 'These ones prove to be 'worthless
and `useless / and therefore are 'cut and thrown
into the ,fire / the 'last in God's `kingdom /

whereas 'those who keep ,growing / by the 'heav-
enly 'standards of hu,mility / and ac'ceptance of
,discipline / become the 'first to find 'entry in
God's `kingdom //

Lk 14:7-14



When you give a 'luncheon or a ,dinner / do not
invite your ,friends / or your ,brothers / or your
,relatives / or rich `neighbours / in case they may
invite you in re,turn / and you would be re`paid //
But ,when you give a banquet / invite the ,poor /
the ,crippled / the ,lame / and the `blind //
And
`you will be blessed / because they `cannot repay
you / for you will be re'paid at the resurr'ection of
the `righteous // (vv. 12-14)



The 'message given by 'Jesus through the
'parable in to'day's gospel ,passage / is in
the 'context when he is in'vited to 'eat at
the house of one of the 'leaders of the `Pharisees
// However their in'tention is not `sharing / but
setting a `trap // They want to 'watch his 'conduct
`closely (Lk 14:1) // Those who are re'sisting Jesus'
,message / would like to 'find e'ventual 'weak-
nesses to `attack ,him // Jesus `shocks them / by
healing a 'man with 'dropsy on the ,Sabbath / and
'then leaves them `speechless (vv. 2-6) //

Be,sides / upon 'seeing that the ,guests /
pre'sumably all `Pharisees / were 'scrambling for
,first places at the table /Jesus probably 'laughed

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

to see the `scene / and took the foot `end of the table / and then He ex'plained `why / Those 'who 'push themselves will be 'envied and dis`liked for it / those who put ,others first / will be res'pected and `honoured for it //

,Friends / every ,day / we 'choose between `options / `don't we / Are we a,ware / that 'Jesus is on the watch-'out for the kind of 'choices that we make every ,day / Here Jesus ob'serves ,guests at the luncheon party / 'choosing between `seating options // The 'tendency was ,then / and `still ,is / for people to 'choose the 'best and 'first places for them`selves // Our 'choice is to choose 'honour for our`selves // But `mind you / Jesus is a'ler't to the possi'bility of ,shame / engulfing 'those of us who over'estimate the 'honour `due them // His so'lution is 'not for people to 'think of themselves as `worthless / but on 'any o'ccasion to i,magine / that they are in the 'presence of people of 'great `worth / in ,which case / it is 'wise to assume a `lowly place // 'Honour is 'not something we be`stow on our,selves / it is a `gift // 'Ultimately it is ,God / the 'host of the great 'banquet of the ,kingdom / who will 'show us to our ,place / of whatever `status / and in ,God's presence / all 'other honour will seem 'vain or `trivial // Jesus il-lustrates this ,lesson / at the ex'pense of his 'host

and \guests // Those 'meal-hosts who are 'truly blessed are ,those / whose 'first dinner 'guests are 'those in no po,sition / to re\pay the invitation / the ,poor / the ,crippled / the \blind / because the 'honour 'due to 'these hosts for their hospi,tality / will be 'given by \God // ,So Jesus says / \be pleased / that they \cannot repay / because by acting 'that way in favour of the 'poor and the ,marginalized in the society / we feel \blessed / as 'we are promised ,joy / 'peace and 'happiness deep \down in us / and 'that will not be taken \away from us //

The 'poor on earth are not 'only those with 'little of 'this world's \goods // 'They are also 'those with 'little ,knowledge / 'few ,talents / 'poor ,looks / and 'poor perso\nality // There are 'many 'ways in which people are \poor / and 'all need our \love //

For e,xample / 'loneliness is 'real \poverty // We 'find it \everywhere // 'Why can't we prick 'out someone we ,know / who is ,lonely / and show them \love / invite them into our \lives / 'love them in the 'way they \need to be loved / in 'ways that will make them \happy // 'Not that we 'try to make them 'over into ,our image / or our \standards // 'Then we are 'truly 'imitating 'Jesus in his com\passion / because the 'emphasis is on the \other / \not on our,selves //

Lk 15:11–32



But the 'father said to his ,slaves / 'Quickly bring
out a `robe / the `best ,one / and put it `on him /
put a 'ring on his ,finger / and 'sandals on his `feet
// And get the fatted 'calf and `kill it / and let us 'eat
and `celebrate / for this 'son of mine was ,dead /
and is a`live again / he was ,lost / and is `found //
And they be'gan to `celebrate // (vv. 20: 22–24)



St 'Luke was the 'only / so to say `gentile of
the evangelists // 'That must be the 'reason
for the ,mercy / found in an extra'ordinary
'measure in his ,life / wherein he had pur'sued the
profession of `medicine // The 'saying that a 'doc-
tor sees ,men / in their 'real ,mould / is quite 'true
of 'Luke the `doctor // St 'Luke saw 'men in their
`real nature // In the 'same mode did he `love
them // The ,icon of St Luke / is the 'symbol of
sacri'ficial ,animal / a 'young `bull // St 'Luke is the
'only e,vangelist / who tran'scending the 'bound-
aries of Jewish tra,ditions / sees 'Christ as the 'Sa-
viour of both 'Jews and `Gentiles // 'Faber 'quali-
fies St 'Luke as the e,vangelist / who saw the 'depth
and 'width of God's 'love and for`giveness //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

The 1⁵th chapter in St ,Luke's Gospel / is the most ,known / and 'highly esteemed 'passage in the New `Testament // As 'this part of the New Testament carries the 'gist of 'Christ the Saviour's 'message to the 'whole of hu,manity / it is a'c-claimed as 'the `Gospel of gospels' / or 'the 'heart of the `third gospel' // The 'parables of the ,Lost Sheep / the Lost ,Coin / and the 'Prodigal 'Son and his ,Brother / sketch 'out for us the mi'raculous 'picture of God's 'love and ,patience / knowing no 'bounds and `measures //

It is in the 'context of the 'Jewish 'strict ob'servance of 'rituals and tra'ditions in pre-val-ence in ,Palestine / during Christ's ,lifetime / we have to under`stand these parables // Christ 'Jesus told these 'parables to a co,m,munity / that found ful,filment / 'only in the ob,servance of rules / and were 'least 'bothered about up'holding human 'values and re'lationships // Their 'staunch be'lief and con,viction was / that 'heaven re,joices / not in the re'pentance and re`turn of ,sinners / but in their 'ruin and per`dition // It is by 'rooting out these 'false 'notions and con'ceptions of ,Jewish faith / that Jesus 'lived in the company of ,public-ans / ,sinners / and `gentiles / and 'they in turn found ,in Jesus / a 'person whom they could ,trust / and 'share their 'problems and `grievances with

// 'Jesus told these ,parables / in the midst of a co,m,munity / that kept fore'seeing the 'death and de'struction of 'sinners and tax co,l,lectors / under the 'firm be,lief / that their sal'vation is in 'no way 'possible //

To'day's Gospel 'passage from ,Luke / brings us the 'parables of the 'Prodigal 'Son and his ,Brother / for our 'meditative re'flection // The Parable of the ,Prodigal Son / is 'known to be the most re,nowned / the most ,beautiful / and the 'tenderest little 'story of a ,father / i'neffably 'rich in 'love // Though 'known as the 'parable of the ,Prodigal Son / it is 'really the story of a ,father / who is 'prodigal with his 'love //

It be'gins with him as the 'father of 'two ,sons / 'losing however the ,younger one / following par'tition of the 'property on his de'mand // 'This one is 'lost and in dis'grace in a 'foreign land / the 'victim of his own 'folly and self-in'dulgence // Having 'wasted the re,sources of sonship which he'd taken / this 'son became a paid 'servant in that 'far 'land // He came to his 'senses one ,day / while 'out in the ,fields / and de'cided it was 'better to be a 'servant at ,home / than a 'servant in a 'for-
eign country // He set out for ,home / practising his speech of con'tritio'n // 'Seeing him in the ,dis-
tance / the father goes 'out to him // He 'listens to

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the practised ,speech / then `cuts him short / My
'son is `here // The 'best ,robe / the au'thority of
the family ,ring / ,sandals / and 'lavish 'feast are all
pro,vided / in cele'bration of this 'one who came
'home to be a `servant / only to 'find himself re'-
ceived a'gain as a `son // Tom 'Wright sug,gests
that 'this is a 'story of the dis'graced and 'exiled
sons of ,Israel / who dis'cover ,in Jesus / that 'exile
has indeed ,ended / and resto`ration has come //

The well-'known story con'tinues with a
'father's 'loss of his `older son // 'This one is 'lost at
,home / 'trapped in self-`righteousness // Having
'failed to 'utilize the re,sources of his sonship / this
'son has come to ,think of himself / as 'just
a'nother paid 'servant on his 'father's `land //
While 'out in the ,fields / his 'senses are aroused
by `party music // 'Finding out it was for his
'younger ,brother / he takes o'ffence / and de'cides
he 'won't go `home // ,In the fields / he practises
his 'speech of indig`nation // The father goes ,out
to him / and 'listens to the practised `speech // My
,son' he pleads / come ,in / But the 'older son
re,veals / that for ,years / he has been 'working
with the ,mind-set / not of `son / but of a `servant
// He is ,adamant / that he's been a `good ,servant /
therefore he has 'earned himself a `party // The
father per'sists in his a,ttempt / to re'store this

'servant-thinking 'man as a 'son / for he has ,two
 sons / who have been 'wasteful of their 'sonship //
 'Both have been 'lost // The 'younger is now
 re,stored / with 'much cele'bration // It is no 'ac-
 cident / that at the ,end of the story / the 'father is
 to be ,found / still 'out in the field with the
 re,maining son / seeking to 'save the one 'still lost
 (Lk 19:10)

'Prayer

*Lord ,God / 'free us to ,worship you / as 'grateful ,chil-
 dren / and 'not as hired 'servants // 'Father of ,all / I
 have felt your 'loving em,brace / when I have ,failed /
 and been a'way too 'long // I ,know / that the 'least
 de'sire to re'turn to the ,right way / will lead me 'back
 into your 'arms // Bring me 'home again and a ,gain /
 until you ,call me / to the e'ternal ,home / from which I
 shall 'never 'stray / A`men //*

Lk 17:11-19



Were not ten made ,clean // 'Where are the `nine
// (v. 17)



The a'ccount of the 'cure of 'ten ,lepers / is
'found only in `Luke's gospel // 'Leprosy
was a di,sease / which the 'Jews of 'Jesus'
times con,sidered to be / more than ,other dis-
eases / a 'mark of 'God's dis`pleasure // Jesus was
'now on his 'march to Je,rusalem / about the 'mid-
way between Sa'maria and `Galilee // It was 'then
the 'ten 'lepers moving in a ,company / lifted 'up
their voices from a ,distance / (as re'quired in
Le'viticus 1'3:4,6) and a'ppealed to Jesus' com'pas-
sion `on them // 'Jesus the loving ,Lord / who
'came to the 'world to take a'way ,sin / felt
com`passion on them / and bade them 'go and
'show themselves to the `priests (see Leviticus
13:49) // In o'bedience to the 'Lord's ,word / they
'all went to the `priest ,As they went / they were
'cleansed //

But just 'one of them re'turned to 'Jesus to give
'thanks // He thought 'Jesus to be the 'Author of
his ,cure / and wished 'Him to have the `glory of it
// With a loud ,voice / he `glorified God" //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Jesus took 'special 'notice of ,this one / who
'happened to be a Sa'maritan / whereas the 'others
be'longed to the so-called ,chosen people /
namely the 'Jews //

The 'Jews were in those 'days supposed to have
the 'pure 'knowledge and 'worship of ,God / that
the Sa'maritans had `not // But ironi,cally / it was
'one from among the ,latter / that came 'forward
to 'glorify God for the `cure / when the 'nine Jew-
ish 'lepers cured kept `back // Jesus 'then raised
the ,question / 'Where are the `nine // 'Soon did
Jesus come 'out with the ,statement / in confir'ma-
tion and apprecia'tion of the 'cure gained by the
Sa'maritan leper / Thy 'faith hath made thee
'whole //

✓True / the 'rest as well were made `whole / but
it was 'due to the 'power of Christ in com'passion
to their di'stress // But the Sa'maritan leper dis-
'tinguished himself by being made ,whole / thanks
to his `faith //

The 'nine Jewish 'lepers who got ,cured / had
'not their cure re,voked by Christ / in the wake of
their in`gratitude expressed // 'Nor did He express
'sadness at their in,gratitude / feeling 'sorry for
Him,self / in self-,pity / 'characterizing the `hu-
mans / as 'Lear in 'King Lear by 'Shakespeare says
in so,liloquy / "How 'sharper than a 'serpent's

,tooth it is / to have a 'thankless `child" // 'Probably Jesus felt 'sorry for the 'nine 'lepers after their `cure / for in 'showing their in,gratitude / 'they were the `losers // Had they expressed 'gratitude to 'God for their ,healing / the 'joy of their healing would have in'creased knowing no ,bounds / they would have 'got their 'hearts more ,opened / and there'by their 'love for God would have gone `deeper // They had 'missed for ,sure / the 'deep inner 'peace and 'joy of thanks,giving / by 'failing in their `duty / whereas a Sa,maritan / a ,stranger / a 'person from the po'litical and re'ligious ,margins / had re'turned full of 'praise and 'gratitude to `God //

An un'grateful person can be com'pared to the Dead ,Sea / and the 'grateful one to the Sea of `Galilee // ,Both the seas / we are `told / have the 'same `source of water / 'namely the river `Jordan // But the Dead 'Sea being so far be'low the mean ,sea level / has 'no `outlet streams // 'Water flows `into the Dead Sea / but does 'not flow `out of it / to the e'ffect that over a 'million 'tons of 'water e'vaporate from the Dead ,Sea / every ,day / leaving it 'salty and un'fit for any ma'rine `life / whereas the 'Sea of 'Galilee is re'splendent with 'rich ma'rine ,life / with 'lots of 'plants and `fish // `Why // The ,reason is / the river 'Jordan flows

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,into the Sea of Galilee / and 'then flows `out of it
// The 'inflow and 'outflow of water from the river
,Jordan / 'through the Sea of ,Galilee / keeps it
'healthy and 'vibrant with `life // The 'Dead Sea
gets 'water from ,Jordan River / and `holds it // It
does 'not `give // Re,sult // 'Not 'alive but `dead!

Our 'gratitude to 'God should not be 'merely in
`words / but by our `life / a 'life that re'sponds to
God's ,goodness / through our 'goodness to `oth-
ers // Our en'tire ,lives / not `just ,prayers / must
be a thanks'giving to `God // 'Let's be re'minded
of Helen ,Keller's words / So 'much has been
,given to me / that I have 'no 'time to 'ponder that
which has been de`nied! My 'own often re'peated
,prayer is / O 'God who has 'given me so ,much /
'mercifully grant 'me one more ,thing / a 'grateful
`heart //

'How do 'we express 'gratitude to 'God and
`men // Is it 'only in terms of ,inflow / and 'not
,outflow // Is the 'only 'time we turn to 'God a
time of ,trouble // Are our 'prayers 'always words
of a pe,tition // Do we for'get the Lord's ,love for
us / in 'everyday 'things like fresh ,air / 'sunlight
and ,showers / ,food / ,friends / 'life it'self //

Lk 17:11–19



Then Jesus ,asked / Were not `ten made clean //
But the other `nine / Where `are they // Was 'none
of them found to re'turn and give praise to 'God
except this `foreigner // (vv. 17, 18)



In to'day's gospel ,passage / we have an a'c-
count of the 'cure of ten `lepers // We ,don't
have this / in any 'other of the e`vangelists //
More than ,other diseases / 'leprosy was con-
'sidered by the ,Jews / to be a 'mark of God's
dis`pleasure / therefore 'Jesus the ,Saviour / who
came to take a'way ,sin / took 'special ,care / to
'cleanse the lepers that fell in his `way // Now he
was on his 'way to Je,rusalem / say almost the
,midway / in the 'frontier country between Sa'-
maria and `Galilee //

Then there a'ppeared ten 'lepers in a `company
// They were shut 'out from so'ciety with `others /
'still they were at 'liberty to con'verse with one
a`nother // Be,sides / their 'pain probably brought
them to`gether // Keeping the 'mandatory ,dis-
tance / as required in Le'viticus 1'3 / 4,6 / these
lepers 'yelled for 'Jesus to show them ,mercy in

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the following `words / ,Jesus / ,Master / have
`mercy on us // (v. 13)

'Christ then 'told them to go to the ,priests / to
be in'spected by them as per the cere'monial `law
// (Leviticus 13:49) Al'though the 'healing had 'not
been then e'ffected / and there was no 'evidence
yet that it `would / quite in o'bedience to Christ's
,bidding / and in obs'ervance of the law in ,preval-
ence / they `all went to the priests // And we are
told they were made ,clean / `as they went // This
,shows / that we can ex'pect 'God to meet us with
,mercy / when we are found in ob'servance of our
`duty //

Yet the 'ten lepers having been ,healed / only
'one felt like turning ,back / and giving 'praise and
'thanks to the `Author of his cure // He 'knew he
had en'countered 'God in his 'contact with `Jesus /
so he 'first offered his loud ,praise to God / then
fell at Jesus' ,feet / giving 'thanks to this ,One /
through whom 'God had so 'wonderfully `acted //
And 'who was ,that one / who re'turned full of
'praise and `gratitude // He was a Sa`maritan / a
`foreigner / a `stranger / a 'person from the po'lit-
ical and re'ligious `margins // Once a,gain / 'from
the margins the 'praise of God re`sounded // Sa'-
maritans were `people / who were looked 'down
upon by the `Jews / as 'they in their `eyes / were

'people deprived of the 'pure 'knowledge and
 \worship of God / whereas 'they being ,Jews /
 God's \chosen ,ones / \had it // The Sa'maritans
 were de'spised by ,orthodox Jews / as 'people of
 mixed ,race / de'scendants of 'those planted in the
 'north of the country by a ,conqueror / gene,ra-
 tions ago / de'fective and he'retical in their be'lief
 and \worship // But like the 'Roman cen'turion
 who felt un'tworthy to have 'Jesus in his ,house /
 the 'Canaanite woman who 'pleaded for her
 ,daughter / 'here was one who 'recognized the
 di\vinity in Jesus / and by his re'sponse put to
 'shame ,many / who pro'fessed to keep the ,law /
 and have 'pure 'knowledge and \worship of God //
 Here 'this serves to 'highlight the in'gratitude of
 those many ,Jews / of 'whom Jesus \speaks // It
 'also brings us the ,truth / that al'though the Holy
 'Spirit comes as a par'ticular gift of 'power to the
 ,Church / it is a 'great mis,take to think / 'that
 power to be \limited to the Church //

A'nother truth we are to 'learn from the 'cure
 of the ten ,lepers is / that the 'nine 'Jewish lepers
 had their ,cure of the disease / out of 'Christ's
 \mercy / and had it 'not re,voked / on grounds of
 their in'gratitude // They were made ,whole / by
 the ,power of Christ / in com'passion to their
 di'stress // But the Sa'maritan leper had his 'cure

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'specially con`firmed by Christ / Your 'faith has made you `well / by which ,Christ saw him / di'stinguished from the `rest //

If we ig`nore the ,truth / that what is great about our ,life / is 'not what 'we do for ,God / but what 'God does for ,us / we will 'miss the whole 'joy of thanks`giving // Jesus 'really did not 'personally ,need / the 'thanks of the other `nine lepers / He would sur`vive wi,thout it // So when he ex`pressed 'sadness at their in,gratitude / it 'wasn't a matter of 'Jesus feeling `sorry for Him,self / 'because 'nobody a`ppreciates me // He was feeling 'sorry for `them // 'They were the `losers // The 'greatest 'joy of their 'healing would have been the 'opening of their ,hearts / the 'deepening of their 'love for 'God who had `healed them // This 'greater 'healing and 'deeper 'blessing they had `missed // They had 'missed the 'deep inner ,peace / and the 'joy of thanks`giving //

'How about `us // Is the 'only 'time that we turn to God a time of ,trouble // Are the 'only ,words we speak with Him / words of pe,tition // Do we for`get the Lord's ,love for us / in 'everyday things like 'fresh ,air / ,sunlight / ,food / ,friends / ,life itself //

Poet Ra`bindranath Ta'gore ex`pressed it in `this way / I have 'thanked the ,trees / that have

made my 'life \fruitful / but have 'failed to
 re'member the ,grass / that has 'ever kept it \green
 // We take so 'much of God's 'blessings in cre'ation
 for \granted // 'What of his 'blessings to ,each of
 us / 'personally \given // There is an 'Irish ,proverb
 / Get 'on your \knees / and 'thank 'God you are 'on
 your \feet // Helen ,Keller said / so 'much has been
 ,given to me / that I have no ,time / to 'ponder
 over 'that which has been de\nied // My 'own of-
 ten re'peated ,prayer is / Oh 'God who has 'given
 me so ,much / 'mercifully 'grant me one ,more
 thing / a 'grateful \heart //

Prayer

*Loving ,Jesus / 'healer of 'souls and ,bodies / 'source of
 'endless com,passion / cre'ate in me a more 'grateful
 'spirit for 'all your \mercies // 'Help me to 'know your 'p-
 resence in ,those / who do not 'seem to be in ,faith / and
 to make 'known my ,praise / for 'all you have \done for
 me // A\men //*

Lk 18:1–8

The 'parable of the im'portunate 'widow that we find in to'day's gospel ,passage / in 'Luke ch ,1,8 / is 'one meant to ,show / that the 'God we believe in is a 'listening God // Of the 'four e,vangelists / 'Luke is the one who 'most in'sists on the 'place of 'prayer in the ,life of Jesus / and 'also on the di'sciples' 'need to 'pray 'always //

Like 'many of his ,parables / 'this as well is a ,brief / but 'vivid ,story / 'very ,human / and somewhat a'musing // The 'parable is told of a ,widow / who is both in 'need of ,justice / and a per'sistent 'pleader // Be'fore her is a 'judge with no ,fear of God / and 'no sensi'tivity to how his 'actions are per'ceived by his co'mmunity // He is 'shameless / as 'he himself ad'mits as ,one / with no ,fear of God / and no re'spect for 'people / yet he 'recognizes that this 'widow may wear him 'out // More ,literally / this 'boxing term ,means / to 'give someone a black 'eye / and has the ,figurative meaning / to 'blacken someone's 'face / ,that is / to 'shame them // Now how i,rronic it is / that a 'judge who ad'mits having no ,fear of God / and no re'spect for ,anyone / 'senses the bothe'ration and em'barrassment this 'widow might bring u,pon him / by her con'tinually ,coming // 'Finally he grants her 'justice against her o'pponent // The

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,reasoning of the parable is / that if the 'lesser case is ,true / that a 'widow without an 'advocate can win 'over a 'shameless ,judge / how 'much more 'true is the `greater case / that those ,chosen ones / who cry 'out to a 'sensitive ,God / will be 'heard and `vindicated // The 'widow's case in the parable 'shows for ,sure / that God's 'mercy will come at 'last to his e,lect / 'even if it is de`layed // If the 'widow in the parable is a ,stranger / 'God's praying 'people are his own ,chosen ones / whom he ,knows / and `loves // The 'widow is only `one / but the 'praying people of 'God are `many // 'Saints on ,earth / be'siege the throne of 'grace with their u'nited `prayers //

She 'comes to a ,judge / that 'bids her keep her `distance / 'we come to a ,Father / who 'bids us come `boldly to him // 'She comes to an un`just judge / 'we come to a `righteous Father //

'She comes to this ,judge / 'purely upon her 'own a`ccount / but 'God is him'self engaged in the 'cause of which 'we are so`liciting //

She has no 'friend to speak `for her / but 'we have an ,Advocate with the Father / his own `Son / who 'ever 'lives to make inter`cession for us //

She has no en'couragement given her to `ask / but 'we have a ,promise / that it shall be `given to us //

'She can have ac'cess to the judge / 'only at
some 'certain `times / but 'we may ,cry to God /
'day and ,night / at 'all `hours //

Her impor'tunity is pro`voking to the judge /
but 'our importunity is `pleasing to God / and
'therefore we may ,hope / shall a'vail ,much / if it
is an e'ffectual 'fervent `prayer //

Notwith'standing all ,these / there is the 'final
'question in today's gospel `text / And ,yet / when
the Son of Man ,comes / will he find ,faith on
earth //

The 'question implies a 'strong ne,gation / `No
/ he will `not / he him'self fore`sees it // When
,Christ comes / he will 'find but `little faith // He
may find ,many / that have the 'form and 'fashion
of `godliness / but 'few that have ,real faith / that is
sin'cere and `honest // And therefore ,many of his
chosen ones / will begin to be 'weary of waiting
`for him // This im,plies / that 'faith is 'not
auto`matic / 'nor is it given for,ever / 'if it is not
`nourished // 'Faith 'grows and ma'tures through
,prayer / as 'well as through the 'practice of the
'justice that is asked of `God // 'Faith is a `gift / and
it is 'also a `task //

Lk 18:35–43



He said ,Lord / 'let me 'see a'gain // ,Jesus said to him / Re'ceive your `sight / your 'faith has `saved you // (vv. 41–42)



The 'story of the resto'ration of 'sight to the 'blind man at ,Jericho / found in ,Luke's gospel / is 'also told in the gospels of 'Mathew (20:29–34) and `Mark (10:46–52) // When 'Mathew says there were ,two blind men / 'Mark and 'Luke mention only `one // 'Luke says 'Jesus worked the ,miracle / while `entering Jericho / 'Mathew and 'Mark time it at His `exit from the city // A,gain / Mark has a ,name for the blind man / Bartimaeus //

In the light of 'these minor 'differences in the re'cording of the miracle in the sy,noptic gospels / (Mathew Mark and Luke) we are to pre,sume / that 'one of the blind men re,gained his sight / while 'Jesus was `entering the city of Jericho / and the ,other / after 'Jesus' 'visit to Za'chaeus' ,home / on his 'onward 'journey to Je`rusalem // 'Both of them 'managed to have an en,counter with Jesus / while 'sitting by the ,roadside / where they 'knew Jesus would `pass //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Now 'coming to the blind 'beggar found in to'day's passage from ,Luke's gospel / what should draw our 'special a,ttention / is his `plea to Jesus / ,Lord / 'let's me 'see a`gain / and the 'Lord's i'm-mediate re,pnse to him / Re'ceive your `sight / your 'faith has `saved you //

The 'same plea as the ,blind man made / is 'now a uni'versal ,cry / arising from the 'heart of ,anyone / who is 'hard put to 'sufferings of 'body and `mind / ,Lord / I am at a 'loss to under'stand the 'meaning of `life / the meaning of the 'suffer-ings that I go `through //

Be'fore Jesus' 'march to Je'rusalem through 'Jericho had ,started / He had fore'told His di's-ciples a ,third time / that He would under'go great ,suffering / at the hands of the `Gentiles (Lk 18:32-33) // But as told in the ,same gospel / 'just 'previ-ously to to,day's passage / They under'stood 'nothing about all these `things / in ,fact / what He 'said was ,hidden from them / and they did not 'grasp what was `said (v. 34) //

Despite the 'three pre'dictions Jesus made on His ,sufferings / ,death / and resurr'ection in Je,ru-salem / we 'see the disciples 'fail in compre`hend-ing what He said // Though 'gifted with ,physical sight / their 'eyes were 'blinded to seeing ,God's purposes / which re'quires an 'inner `spiritual

sight // In 'contrast to the disciples ,failure / in 'having such a ,spiritual sight / Jesus en'counters a ,blind man / whose 'sight he re'stores // When he a'ddresses Jesus as ,Lord / we are re'minded of the ,meaning / in which the 'early 'Church used the ,word / in their salu'tations and 'prayers to the ,Lord / the 'One who had al'ready won the de'cisive 'victory over 'evil and `death / a ,victory / in which 'all 'people of ,faith / will ,share with the Lord / in their 'struggle against all 'kinds of 'evil in the `world //

`Yes / the kind of 'faith professed by the 'blind man re'flects a 'spiritual ,sight / that 'goes be'yond the 'wisdom of the ,world / and the world of `science // In the ,wisdom of the world / 'suffering is ,meaningless / 'auguring 'no resurr`ection // In the world of ,science / 'knowledge that is 'gained is all 'based on 'study of ,things / that are ob'servable and 'verifiable by the 'laws of 'reason and ex`periments / whereas a 'man of 'faith or ,prayer / 'lovingly ,searches for / and re'sponds to the ,law-maker / the Prime ,Mover / the ,Person / the ,Lord behind the world / who is unob'servable to the 'naked `eye // And 'this sort of ,faith / with 'loving 'trust in the ,person of Jesus / that Jesus 'finds in ,blind man / and he is 'praised and ,blessed by

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

saying / Re'ceive your `sight / your 'faith has
'saved you //

Prayer

*'Loving Lord ,Jesus / just as the 'blind man and the
'early ,church / and the 'saintly 'souls in suc'ceeding
'centuries re'ceived their ,sight / and ,followed you / in
'all the 'circumstances of their 'lives glorifying ,God / we
,pray to you / that 'we as 'well be given the ,sight / to be
'healed by 'faith in you // In'spire us through your 'Holy
,Spirit / to 'ever bear in our 'hearts your ,words / 'I am
the 'light of the `world // Who'ever follows ,me / will
'never walk in `darkness / but will have the 'light of `life
(Jn 8:12) // With 'your light of ,life / may we ,follow you
/ and 'glorify ,God / in 'all the vi,cissitudes / that con'-
front us in our `lives // A`men //*

Lk 18:35–43



When he came ,near / he asked him / 'what do
you want me to `do for you // He said ,Lord / let
me `see again // Jesus said to him Re'ceive your
`sight / your 'faith has `saved you // (vv. 41, 42)



In to'day's gospel 'passage from ,Luke's gospel
/ we have an a'ccount of one 'blind man at
,Jericho / to whom 'Christ gave `sight // This
'episode is 'also found in 'Mathew ,20 / 2,9-3,4 /
and 'Mark ,10 / 4,6-5`2 // 'Mark gives us an ac-
count of `one / giving his ,name / Barti,maeus /
'son of Ti`maeus / whom Christ ,cured / as when
'he and his di'sciples and a large 'crowd were `leav-
ing Jericho // 'Mathew speaks of `two / whom Je-
sus ,cured / as they were `leaving Jericho // 'Luke
says it was when he a`pproached Jericho // `Pos-
sibly / there were ,two blind men / of whom ,one
was healed / as Jesus ,entered the city / and the
,other / as he `left // 'probably as ,Jesus entered /
they `followed along / and 'after Jesus was 'through
at the house of Za,cchaeus / 'placed themselves by
the ,road / where they 'knew he would `pass // Just
be'fore he healed the ,blind man / 'Jesus had told
his di'sciples / for the `third ,time / that he was on

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

his 'way to cruci'fixion (31-34) // But they did 'not under'stand //

Human 'beings cre'ated in the ,image of God / are 'gifted with 'two `types of sight / 'physical and `spiritual // To the 'blind man shouting for ,mercy Jesus said / 'What do you want me to `do for you // He said ,Lord / let me `see again // Jesus said to him Re'ceive your `sight / your 'faith has `saved you //

'Faith gives us 'spiritual `sight / or the 'deep inner `vision / which is more im'portant than the gift of `eyesight itself // The 'person of 'faith has eyes ,open / to see the 'finger of God tracing 'out the 'plan of his 'earthly `life //

There is a 'tendency in our 'present ,world / to find a contra'diction between 'God and `science / as if 'God were not the 'maker of ,science / or 'science the `creature of God / as though 'science somehow seal 'off the 'fountain of 'higher `knowledge //

Now 'let's see how the 'man of science looks u'pon this `world // He 'studies ,things / and the re,lations between things / and the `laws governing things // The 'world is made 'up of `things / ,elements / combi,nations / and the `laws governing them //

The 'person of 'faith or the man of ,prayer /
 'looking at the ,same world / 'searches for a 'per-
 son / he studies the 'personal ,action / the ,pur-
 pose / the 'plan by which 'that person 'moves the
 `world //

'Why should 'these be contra`dictory // The 's-
 cientist searches the ,law / the 'person of faith
 speaks to the `lawmaker // The 'scientist is after
 `knowledge / he e'xamines the ob`servable / he
 'classifies the ma,terial / he in'quires after the `sec-
 ondary causes //

The 'person of 'faith or ,prayer / is after a 'per-
 sonal re'lationship / he re'sponds to the ,Person /
 who has given the 'laws and the 'causes their
 `meaning // He 'too is after `knowledge / but 'for
 the sake of `love // 'This is the 'person Jesus
 ,praises when He says / your 'faith has `saved you
 // ,That is / you have gone be,yond things / to a
 'trust in the ,person / from 'whom all `things have
 come / and this ,trust / this ,faith / this 'love has
 worked 'powerfully in your `life //

'Prayer

*Lord 'Jesus who opened the 'eyes of the ,blind / open my
 ,eyes / to 'see you in all your 'love and com`passion //*
*'Bring your ,healing touch / to 'clear my 'sight that is
 'clouded by 'sin and `failures / so that 'I may have the*

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

*,vision / to 'follow you ,faithfully / and ,glorify God / till
the 'end of my 'life on `earth // A`men //*

'John's \ Gospel

Jn 1:14–18



From his 'fullness we have ,all received / 'grace
upon `grace // The 'law indeed was given through
`Moses / 'grace and 'truth came through Jesus
`Christ // (vv. 16, 17)



To'day being the second 'Sunday of
E,piphany / the gospel 'passage given for
our re'flection and med,tation / is the con-
'cluding 'verses of the 'Prologue part of John's
,gospel / 'ch ,1 / 1'4-1'8 // Here the e'vangelist ,tells
us / that the 'Word who was ,God / became 'flesh
in the 'person of `Christ // In 'biblical ,language /
'flesh means the human `being / with at 'times a
touch of `weakness // The 'Word who was 'God
enters into ,history / taking 'on our human con,dit-
tion / in'cluding its most 'fragile `aspect //

And the ex,pression / and `lived among us / has
its 'origin in the O`T // The ob'servable 'form of
the 'Word in the O,T / was his 'dwelling in a `tab-
ernacle / ,that is / in the 'tabernacle of `Moses / but
,now / he 'lives or ,dwells among us / like a human
'being // In the ,desert / on the 'way to the ,prom-
ised land / the 'shade of the 'tent provided ,rest /
,meaning / and 'courage for the 'long 'march

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

a`head // The 'presence of this ,tent / 'changes the a`ridity of the ex,perience / trans'forming it into an in'cipient en'counter with `God //

For ,John / the 'Word that became ,flash / is the 'tent of our 'new en'counter with God // Being di'sciples of ,Jesus means / ,living / be,lieving / and 'hoping under `this tent // The 'Word became ,flesh / and 'lived among us from 'Mary's `body / and being 'charged with hu,manity / the 'Word re'turns to the `Father / and we have 'seen his ,glory / the glory as of a 'father's 'only `son (v. 14) // There is a su'ggestive 'rhythm in 'John's description of the 'Word of God in his `Prologue / the 'Word was 'with God in the be,ginning / he 'enters into 'history to bring ,life / and he re'turns to the `Father // 'This is why in verse 1,6 John says / From his 'fullness we have ,all received / 'grace upon `grace //

'Grace upon ,grance / is 'grace for the pro'moting and ad`vancing of grace // In other ,words / grace is a 'talent to be `traded with // 'Grace upon ,grace / can 'also be taken as 'grace in ,us / 'answering to 'grace in `him / as the im'pression upon the ,wax / 'answers the 'seal line for`line // The 'grace we receive ,from Christ / 'changes into the 'same `image //

'Grace and `Truth

In the ,gospel / we have the dis'covery of the 'greatest ,truths / to be em'braced by under'stand-ing the 'true `nature of God / for it was re'vealed in `human life // 'Christ re'vealed the ,truth / that had 'been from the be,ginning / that 'God is `love // With the 'coming of Jesus 'Christ in the ,flesh / 'grace was let 'loose into the ,world / 'lighting the 'dark ,places / making all 'things `new // There was no 'more 'room for ,error / for 'failing to under'stand the 'true `nature of God //

In the ,gospel / we have 'also the dis'covery of the 'richest ,grace / to be em'braced by the 'will and a'ffections // 'Grace and ,truth / that 'came to us through Jesus ,Christ / is a 'much ,clearer dis-covery / than the 'law given by `Moses // 'That which was 'given by ,Moses / was 'purely 'terrify-ing and `threatening / but which is 'given by ,Jesus Christ / has 'all the bene'ficial 'uses of the `law / but 'not the `terror / for it is `grace // A'gain in the 'gospel what we have is 'grace and `truth // It is 'grace and 'truth with reference to the ,law / that was given by `Moses // For in the ,gospel / what we have is the per'formance of 'all the O'T `promises // A'gain it is the 'substance of 'all the O'T 'types and `shadows // 'Christ is the 'true paschal ,lamb / the 'true scape-,goat / the 'true `manna // O'T had

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'grace in the `picture / 'we have 'grace in the `person // 'Grace and 'truth that ,came / was 'made by Jesus `Christ //

'John's 'Prologue 'ends with a reaffir'mation of 'God's tran'scendence / 'No one has 'ever `seen God (v. 18) // The incar'nation does not take a'way God's 'holiness and tran'scendence // God is 'utterly `different / `not of ,this world / but `spiritual // But the 'Son has ,seen God / and can therefore re`veal him / It is 'God the 'only ,son / who is 'close to 'Father's ,heart / who has made him `known // Being 'face to face with the ,Father / the 'Son a'lone can `manifest God // 'Christian re'ligion is `holy / in the 'sense that it was 'founded by ,one / who had 'seen ,God / and 'knew 'more of his ,mind / that anyone 'else 'ever `did //

`Prayer

Lord ,God / whose 'truth is re'vealed in 'holy ,scripture / and whose 'grace is 'known to every ,sinner / who turns 'back in 'sorrow and ,love / 'teach me to re'spond to the a'mzing gift of `grace // 'Now in the time of E,piphany / when the 'glory of 'Christ as of a 'Father's 'only ,son / full of 'grace and 'truth is to be re,vealed / draw me 'deeply into the ,love of Christ / that I may 'help ,others / to 'know its `meaning // A'men //

Jn 1:29–34



'Here is the 'lamb of `God / who takes a'way the
sin of the `world // (Jn 2:5)



To'day when we 'enter upon the 'third
'Sunday of E,phany / the gospel 'pas-
sage pre'scribed for our 'reading and
re,flection / carries an a'ccount of John the
'Baptist's ,testimony / as to the `Deity of Jesus //
'This time he gave his 'testimony to his 'own
di'sciples that followed him // Be'fore making
,this testimony to the disciples / John had 'given to
a dele'gation of 'priests and ,Levites / sent by 'Jews
from the 'Sanhedrin in Je'rusalem ,hints / regard-
ing the 'high and di'vine 'status of the Me,ssiah /
who 'was to come after 'him baptizing with `water
/ and who 'was among 'them though they 'knew
Him `not / and whose ,thong of sandal / he 'said in
all hu`mility / he was not 'worthy to un'tie //

And it was the 'next 'day when John 'saw Jesus
'coming toward him to receive ,baptism / he in-
'spired him to 'testify to his di'sciples / that 'Jesus
is the 'lamb of `God / who takes a'way the sin of
the `world // This took ,place / we are `told / in

'HOMILIES made more IN`TELLIGIBLE

'Bethany beyond ,Jordan / where 'John was bap't-
izing people with `water //

Though not ex'plicity 'stated in the ,gospels / it
is ,evident / that soon 'after His 'Forty 'Days 'Wil-
derness Temp,tation / Jesus went 'back from the
'Wilderness to the ,place / where John the 'Baptist
was 'preaching and bap'tizing // Jesus 'went to
John the ,Baptist / to receive 'baptism at his `hands
// And it was 'when John ,saw Jesus / coming
to'ward him to re,ceive baptism / he i,dentified Je-
sus / and 'introduced Him to his 'own di,sciples /
as the 'lamb of ,God / who takes a'way the sin of
the `world //

That Jesus 'Christ is the 'Lamb of ,God /
su'ggests His 'role and mission he took u,p on him-
self / to make a'tonement for the sin of the ,world
/ by his 'death on the cross / in re'semblance of
the 'blood of the 'paschal ,lamb / that se'cured the
'Isralites in the O,T / from the 'stroke of the de's-
troying `angel // 'Christ is our `passover // 'Christ
who was to make a,tonement for sin / is called the
'lamb of `God //

John 'spoke in the A'ramaic ,language / the
'modern `Hebrew of his ,time / to a'ddress the
'crowds that 'came to him to receive `baptism //
The 'word that he used for 'lamb in A'ramaic was

'thalya / which 'also meant 'servant // Thus the
'Lamb of ,God meant / also the 'servant of God //

I'saiah ,wrote / 'He is like a 'lamb led to the
'slaughter // In ,other words / 'Jesus the ,Lamb / is
'perfectly o'bedient to the 'Father // Isaiah ,also
calls Him / the 'suffering Lamb / and therefore the
'suffering 'servant // John the 'Baptist fore'saw in
,Jesus / ful'filment of Isaiah's 'prophecy of the ,ser-
vant / who would 'save his ,people / through his
unde'served 'suffering (Is 53:7) //

'Lamb of 'God is a'nother 'name for the
Me,ssiah / the 'Son of God // 'Hearing John the
'Baptists's ,witness / to 'who Jesus ,really was (v. 34)
/ John's 'disciples 'turned to 'Jesus as the Me,ssiah /
and became his 'first di'ciples //

'Jesus the Me'ssiah takes a'way the sins of the
'world by 'suffering / by 'letting the 'evils of sin
'hurt him // He 'let the 'hatred and 'envy of the
'Pharisees hurt him / He let the 'selfishness and in-
gratitude of the 'people hurt him // Thus He
'suffered all his 'life ,for our sins / until the 'violent
'death of Good 'Friday // In ,doing this / 'Jesus the
'Saviour faced the 'real 'world as we 'know it // We
'all ex'perience ,suffering / 'from the sins of ,oth-
ers / as 'well as from our 'own // Our ,anger /
dis,honesty / ,stubbornness / incon'sistencies / all

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'our sins hurt ,others / as 'we each are hurt by
'others' failings //

The 'message that re'flection on John the
'Baptist's 'testimony about 'Jesus in today's ,gospel
gives us / in 'practical ,life / is 'very 'clear / 'Here is
the 'lamb of 'God / who takes a'way the sin of the
'world //

'Dear 'brothers and ,sisters / 'here on this
,altar / the 'Lord's ,sacrifice is offered / for the
re'mission of our sins //

'Now let's e'xamine our
,conscience / on how 'far is it 'useful for ,each one
of us / in 'liberating us from the 'bonds of ,evil /
,born in us / in consequence of ,sin / in 'solving
the 'problems that ,harass us / in our 'personal and
'family ,life / and in making a 'good ,start / for
leading a 'peaceful and a 'more 'Christian life //

Do I 'try to make 'this holy 'sacrifice my ,own / in
'fullness of ,faith / and by 'active partici,pation in
it / so as it becomes sal'vific to ,me / to my ,family
/ to the co'mmunity I live ,in / and to the 'whole of
this 'parish I am a ,member of //

'Or am I a ,Chris-
tian / as 'lifeless as one who would 'go to 'church
on ,Sundays / 'just to attend a 'day of obli,gation /
'stay there a 'mere ,spectator / and then re'turn
from the place / as if to be 'seen by ,others //

With the con'viction that Holy 'Mass is the foun'dation
stone of our ,faith / and the 'means of 'total
libe'ration and reno'vation of ,life / and re'ceiving

in faith the 'body and 'blood of the paschal ,lamb /
who is offered a 'sacrifice on holy ,altars / for ex-
pi'ation of our ,sins / libe'ration of our 'souls from
the 'bondage of sin here on ,earth / and for 'life
e'ternal in ,heaven / let's 'pray that 'God ,bless us /
to en'joy a 'real Christian 'life with ,Jesus / the
'lamb of `God //

Jn 1:51



'Very 'truly I ,tell you / you will see 'heaven
,opened / and the ,angels of God / a'scending and
dis'cending upon the Son of `Man // (Jn 1:51)



To'day we co'mmemorate the feast of
Ar'changel St ,Michael / the An'gelic
Prince ,Gabriel / and the 'travel guide St
'Raphael // 'These are the 'three of the few ,angels
/ 'actually named in the ,Bible / and 'numbered
with the `human saints / as they have 'come to our
,world / as 'messengers and pro'tectors //

Arch'angel St `Michael

In Reve'lation ,12 / '7–,9 / we find 'Michael and
his 'angels in 'war with 'Satan and his `angels / and
the a'ccount of his 'victory over the ,dragon / has
made him a'ppear as the pro'tector of ,Christians /
against 'forces of ,evil / and as the repre'sentative
of 'wonderful ,works of God / be'yond our un-
der`standing //

Arch'angel St `Gabriel

'Gabriel was the 'name of the An'gelic prince
(Ar'changel) 'sent from ,heaven / to make annun-
ci'ation to ,Mary / and to di'rect a'rrangements for

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the 'Son of God's a'rival on `earth (Lk 1:19 / 26) //
Pre'sumably he was the 'angel who a'ppeared to
the ,shepherds (Lk 2:9 / 13) / and 'also the one sent
to ,Joseph / (Mt 1:24) / and di'rected the 'flight to
'Egypt (Mt 2:13 / 19) // All that 'role he played in
the re'demptive ,drama shows / he was 'very much
'interested and in'volved in human re'demption //

'Travel Guide Angel St `Raphael

In the Book of 'Tobit ,5 / 4–,6 / we find To'bias
Son of ,Tobit / going out in o'bedience to his
,father / to find 'out a 'trustworthy ,man / to 'guide
his 'way to Ra'ges in `Media / he 'came upon
,Raphael / whom he 'thought to be 'just a `man /
though he was an `angel // On 'Tobias' ,query /
Can you 'go with me to 'Rages in ,Media / Are you
a'cquainted with that ,region / the angel ,Raphael
replied / I `will go with you / I am fa'miliar with
the ,way // Be'cause of this a,ssurance / St 'Raphael
is con'sidered to be a 'heavenly 'guide to ,human-
kind / on their 'journey to `heaven //

We ,know / 'Jesus be'lieved in `angels (Mt 4:11)
// There was 'great an'gelic ac,tivity / when he was
,born / and their inter'ventions during his ,Passion
/ to 'strengthen him `through //

The e'xistence of the 'angels re,minds us / that
there are 'more things in 'God's cre,ation / than we
can 'know with our 'mortal `senses // When he

'speaks to Na,thaniel / he re'fers to the story of
 'Jacob's 'dream to `Bethel (Gen 28:12) // Jacob
 ,dreamed / that there was a 'ladder set 'up on the
 ,earth / the 'top of it reaching to `heaven / and the
 'angels of God were a'scending and de'scending
 on it // What Jesus 'meant by his ,reference was /
 that `He was the Ladder // By his Incar,nation /
 and all the 'life and 'death that 'culminated in his
 A,sension / he is the ever'lasting Ladder or ,link /
 between 'this 'world and the world of e`ternity /
 the 'way by which our mor'tality can 'gain im-
 mor`tality // In 'honouring 'Michael and all ,an-
 gels / we are praising ,God / who has 'not 'left us in
 our 'fallen `state / but has 'drawn us into the total-
 ity of his creation / through the 'power of Jesus
 ,Christ / who has 'opened our way to `heaven //

Jn 2:1–11



His mother said to the ,servants / 'Do whatever he
`tells you // (Jn 2:5)



John the e'vangelist na'rrates to us through
to'day's gospel ,passage / a 'wedding in 'Cana
of ,Galilee / and the 'first ,miracle / that 'Jesus
worked to 'meet the dire 'need of 'wine for the
marriage ,feast / held in connection with the ,wed-
ding / to which 'Jesus and his di'sciples had been
in`vited // The wedding 'probably took 'place in
the 'home of some 'friend or `relative of Jesus / for
the ,mother of Jesus / we are `told / had been
'there at the wedding ,house / be'fore 'Jesus and
his di'sciples turned 'up for the e`vent //

Though 'Jesus tries to e,vade the situation say-
ing / my `hour has not yet ,come / thanks to the
pressure of the ,circumstances / he is com,pelled
so to say / to work his 'first `miracle on the occa-
sion //

De'spite being on,nipotent / Lord 'Jesus did ,no
miracle / un'necessarily or light`heartedly // He
re'vealed his di'vine 'power through ,miracles /
`thoughtfully / with spe'cific 'goals and `purposes
// In the ,gospels / we come a'cross des'cription of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

around `40 miracles // So far as ,Jesus was concerned / 'each of his miracles was a ,teaching / procla'mation of the ,Kingdom of God / and re've'lation of his sal'vific `message //

No 'miracle whatsoever is re'corded 'anywhere in the 'gospels as wrought by ,Jesus / that 'shows his person,ality / as 'different from that of an 'ordinary ,man / or in a 'manner that would 'cause any `harm to anyone // 'Neither did Jesus 'do any 'miracle in self-de,fense / while going 'thorough temp'tations in the ,wilderness / in the be'ginning of his 'public `life // Likewise he was not 'ready to give a 'single ,sign / 'yeilding to the 'mounting 'pressure from the `Pharisees around // So 'also he was 'not for working a ,miracle / to 'sate the curi'osity of the 'people of his ,home town / to 'y-ield to the insinu'ations of ,Herod / or 'save him-self from the 'sentence passed by the `judges // Though he 'prayed in Geth,semane / 'my ,Father / if it is `possible / let 'this cup `pass from me / he ,wouldn't do a miracle / to 'save himself from the 'cruel 'clutches of the `cross //

When we 'study the na'rration of 'miracles by the e,vangelists / the 'one thing that is made ,clear is / Jesus turns 'out to be a miracle ,worker / 'only when he 'meets with a ,person / who be'lieves in ,him / or de`sires to believe in him // The e'van-

gelist 'do state in their ,gospels / that Jesus 'could do no ,deed of power in Nazareth / his own 'home ,town / be'cause of their unbe'lief (Mk 6:5) // At the ,same time / we 'read about an o,ccasion / when ,power went forth from Jesus / as 'if without his ,knowledge / and 'caused a 'miracle to happen / yes the 'strong 'faith of the 'woman suffering from 'haemorrhage that made her ,say / if I 'but touch his ,clothes / I 'will be made 'well / and 'that fetches a 'miracle from Jesus // From 'all this what is made 'clear is the ,fact / that a 'miracle is made ,possible / when a ,man / 'fully a'ware of his own limi,tations / stands 'face to face in 'faith with the per'fection of ,life / that the 'person of Jesus repre'sents //

'This is the 'principle 'clearly 'explicated by the 'first mi'raculous ,act by Jesus / that we 'read in to'day's gospel 'passage // ,Mary / 'Jesus and his disciples are in'vited to a marriage 'feast held in a 'house at 'Cana // We can pre,sume / that 'Mary was 'closely re,lated to that family / from the 'way she ,moves about / as a 'person duty 'bound to attend to the 'needs of that house // One of the 'main 'items to be served at 'table on marriage 'feast is 'wine // There is 'no 'greater humili'ation for the ,host to suffer / than 'shortage of 'wine during 'marriage feast // 'That was what ,happened /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

during the 'wedding party at 'Cana // Unex,pec-
tedly / 'wine went 'short during the wedding
re'ception // The 'host was caught 'in a bit of a 'fix
// ,Mary / who was a 'mother ex'tremely 'sensitive
to the ,needs of others / felt the em'barrassment
that the ,family was going through / un'bearable //
She de'cided to do what was 'needed to meet their
'need // That all-'powerful 'God can 'always
render 'help to 'people in their 'needs // That con'-
viction led 'Mary to the 'presence of Jesus // Let
my 'son help 'out these 'helpless household 'mem-
bers in their humili,ation / by 'using his di'vine
'power // ,Mary / who was 'ready to 'mediate a
way-'out for those ,family members / 'tells Jesus
just 'this / They have no 'wine // She ,knew / that
in the ,presence of God / one need not 'heap up
empty ,phrases / and 'use many ,words / as the
'Gentiles do while 'praying // She was 'fully
con,vinced / that the 'One whom she a'pproaches
is the all 'powerful ,God / and that for 'him to 'do
what she ,asks for / is a 'very 'trifling matter //

Here the 'way Mary a'proaches Jesus and ,prays
for / gives us a 'great 'lesson to learn // We can
'clearly ,see here / 'how we are to ,pray / and 'what
should be our dispo'sition to 'God while 'praying
// 'We 'often approach 'God in ,prayer / with a
'long 'list of wants // Ex'cept for getting something

,done / 'rarely do people `pray // In ,fact / there is
 'nothing ,wrong / in 'praying for getting things
 `done // 'Mary the ,mother of God / sets the
 e'xample for 'us in this re`gard / 'Get to 'God for
 your 'needs whatso`ever // Whatever it ,be / we
 won't be ig`nored // But be'ware of our ,focussed /
 'only on our `wants // The a'wareness of ,whom
 we pray to / should stay 'foremost in our `mind //
 'God the om'nipotent ,Father / 'knows what we
 ,need / be`fore we ask him / and de'sires to `grant
 it us // When we find re'sort in ,such a God / we
 our,selves / our own ,wants / and the 'means of se'-
 curing them become unim`portant // 'That's what
 we find 'special about 'Mary's `prayer here // She
 'didn't get ,desperate / to get a 'rather 'cold 'answer
 from Jesus to her ,prayer / ,Woman / what con'-
 cern is that to ,you / and to `me / my `hour has not
 yet ,come // For'getting about the 'need involved
 in her pe,tition / 'Mary gets her 'mind ,focussed /
 'only in the 'Son of God 'standing be`fore her //
 'Calling the household ,servants / she then ,says to
 them / 'Do whatever he `tells you // What a
 com'plete self-su`rrender // The 'firm ,faith / that
 we'll get all our 'needs ful,filled / provided we 'do
 whatever Jesus ,tells us / is the most e'ffective
 ,means / to 'get anything mi'raculously `done by
 God // What we 'see in the 'miracle wrought in

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,Cana / is that 'strong ,faith of Mary / 'influencing
the 'whole of those household ,members / and
,servants over there / to 'do the way Jesus `tells
them to // 'Jesus who tried to e'vade doing any
,miracle saying / My `hour has not yet ,come / is
com,pelled so to say / to give the 'first 'sign before
a co,munity / that put their com'plete `trust in
him //

Jesus ,orders / that the 'six stone ,water jars
over there / 'meant for Jewish 'rites of purifi,cation
/ be 'filled with `water // The 'servants with no
hesi'tation filled them 'up to the `brim // A'gain Je-
sus 'orders them to draw some ,out / and 'take it to
the chief `steward // They were 'willing to 'do
'everything the way he `told them to / 'not feeling
like ,saying / what 'nonsense does this man come
`out with // What is 'needed now is not `water /
but `wine // By the very 'reason of their uni,q'ues-
tioning / 'blind ,faith / a 'miracle was wrought
`there / and they 'got their 'need ful'filled // When
we have set a'side our ,need / and our calcu'lations
as to 'how to get it ,done / and 'then have our ,eyes
/ 'fully set on the di'vine 'power we seek ,shelter in
/ our 'prayer is 'sure to be `heard //

We can 'also 'learn from this mi'raculous e'vent
/ how 'generous is the re'sponse that ,God gives /
'after having heard 'man's `prayer // What an

e'normous 'quantity of 'wine was brought 'out for that marriage 'feast // As much as 'six stone ,water jars / with 'water filled to be 'brim // As 'much a quantity of ,wine / as 'wouldn't run out by 'drinking // Here the e'vangelist tries to ,show us / that all 'things end 'up in ,plenty / while we are in 'contact with Jesus //

A'gain it may be ,noted / that 'Jesus' 'subsequent mi'racles were 'largely to re'lieve human 'suffering // But this 'first 'miracle was done at a 'wedding feast / on a 'festive o'ccasion / 'ministering to 'human ,joy / making people 'happy / as 'if Jesus wanted to a,nounce / 'right at the ,start / that the re'ligion which 'he was now 'introducing into the ,world / was 'no religion of a'sceticism / but a re'ligion of 'natural 'joy // It was 'Jesus' 'blessing on marriage //

Jn 2:1-12

The 'Feast Of Our 'Lady Of A'ssumption / &
'Indian Inde'pendence Day / 'August 1st

If the Resurr'ection and A'scension of our 'Lord Jesus 'Christ constitute the foun'dation of 'Christian ,faith / and the A'ssumption of the 'Blessed Virgin ,Mary / is the re'flection of the truth of Resurr'ection of the ,body / that a 'Christian be'lieves in // What we 'mean by A'ssumption is the ,faith / that 'God re'ceived Mary into ,heaven / 'body and ,soul / without 'letting her be 'subject to ,death / which is the end re'sult of v'sin / as she 'lived on earth unde'filed by sin // Though 'this was in 'prevalence in the 'Church from its very be,ginning / it was on the 'first of No,vember / 1st 9,50 / that Pope 'Pius 'XII of happy ,memory / de'clared A'ssumption of Mary to be a `dogma //

The 'ladder of 'Jacob de'scribed in the Book of 'Genesis ch 2,8 / has been con'sidered as a `proto-type of Mary // 'There we see 'Jacob having a ,dream / in which a 'ladder set upon ,earth / having its 'top reaching to `heaven / along which 'an-gels of God were a'scending and de'scending (Gen: 28:12) // Here Mari'ologists come in to give the interpre,tation / that 'Mary as a ,creature / is one who 'touches the `earth / and as 'Mother of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the Cre,ator / the `Heaven // ,Naturally / A'ssump-
tion is her per'fection // ,Through Mary / 'God
came to the `world / and ,through her / 'men go to
the `Heaven // 'Mary as a ,mediatrix / or ,ladder /
u'nites the 'heaven and the `earth // 'Mary is
'God's 'beautiful cre,ation / given 'shape with 'all
His 'Grace and `blessings // Those who ,love /
,honour / and ,venerate Mary / must 'surely
ack,nnowledge / that 'God has in'fused into the
,person of Mary / whatever 'blessings He has
'poured into His `creatures //

To'day when we re'flect on the 'Blessed Virgin
'Mary assumed into ,Heaven / being 'freed of all
the 'shackles and all 'types of 'slavery of the ,world
/ let's ,pray to God / that we be 'liberated from the
'worldly and 'selfish ,chains / and be 'strengthened
to seek 'first the ,Kingdom of God / and His `right-
eousness // It 'also gives us 'added 'pride and
pleasure to,day / when Inde'pendence Day
cele'brations of our ,nation / Bharat ,Matha / are
being 'held in all 'joy and `gaiety //

It was on 15th ,August / 1'94,7 / that we gained
'freedom from 'British ,rule / and became an in-
de'pendent ,country / under the 'glorious 'leader-
ship of the ,Father of our nation / Ma'hatma
'Gandhi / it was on ,this day / the 'British national
,flag / that had been flying 'high in 'Indian 'air for

,decades / was brought `down / and the 'Indian
 'tricolour national 'flag was 'hoisted and un'furled
 in ,Delhi / to the standing o,vation / and tu'multu-
 ous a'ppause of 'Indians in 'millions gathered on
 the `site // The e'vent marked the 'end of 'British
 co,lonialism / and the 'onset of 'Indian ,rule / after
 pro'longed non-'violent 'struggle for po'litical
 inde'pendence //

It was the un'quenchable ,thirst / and in'sati-
 able de'sire for ,freedom / that 'motivated our
 fore,fathers / to fight `hard for freedom // And
 to'day is the commemo'ration of the re`sult of
 that fight / `yes / the tri'umphant 'victory over the
 'British co'lonial `rule / a 'victory for de'mocracy
 //

But ,sad to say / a good number of our ,coun-
 trymen / can only 'see the day of Inde,pence /
 as 'just an e,vent / that took 'place in the 'history of
 the ,country / 'years a`go //

The 'reason is 'several 'gruesome and
 heart'breaking things are 'happening in our `land
 // On ,one side / you have 'devastating 'loss of
 'lives and ,property / due to 'nature's `fury / and
 on the ,other / the 'evils caused by `man himself //
 Now is the ,time / when 'man himself is 'hunting
 down ,man / to the e'ffect that it's 'dangerous for
 one to 'live a,lone / to 'travel ,freely / or to

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'propagate one's re\ligion // Human 'beings are
'less valued than \animals // Our 'daily news,pa-
pers / carry re'ports and 'pictures of 'strife and
'cruelty of dia'bolic pro,portions / between 'par-
ents and \children // One's own 'parents daring to
'chop their little \babes // 'Cruelty that even 'anim-
als won't in\dulge in // Being 'witness to and in the
'know of these ,things / there are 'some who say in
their so,liloquy / 'What is this 'freedom gained
\worth for // 'India should 'not have become \free
// But ,freedom / as is to be ad,mitted by all / is a
\must for man // But 'freedom is miscon'strued by
,some / as 'liberty to do \anything // And it is high
,time / that 'people as indi'viduals and ,groups /
got 'rid of this miscon\ception of freedom //

My be'loved 'brothers and 'sisters in ,Christ /
'Bharat is \our country // She 'may have 'faults and
'shortcomings in 'various de'grees // But 'we are
duty 'bound to over\come them // Our 'country
should be 'guided to ,that heaven of freedom /
that is de'void of 'greed and ine,quality / 'violence
and in,tolerance / co'rruption and unem,ploy-
ment / 'dread and ,fear / discon'tent and dis'har-
mony // And as ,citizens of the country / it is our
in'variable obli,gation / to do the 'needful in this
re\gard // So let's 'act as re,sponsible / really ,free

citizens / and 'pray for the well-'being of our
'country //

Now in the 'light of to'day's gospel ,passage /
'where and 'how do we find 'real and 'full freedom
and 'happiness //

We 'find it of course in the 'Lord and His
sal'vific 'work // It's not e'nough that a so'ciety
devoid of 'fear is built 'up // A so'ciety enjoying
just 'physical libe,ration / but be'reft of 'spiritual
foun,dation / may 'not last 'long / and as 'said in
today's gospel ,passage / their 'wine may go 'out //

And as 'pointed out in the be'ginning of our
re,flection / 'Mary with her 'life on earth unde'fined
by ,sin / is 'one who rose to great 'heights of ,holi-
ness / on the 'Ladder of freedom // St 'John Dam-
a'scene / 'Father of the ,Church / 'qualifies the
truth of a,ssumption / as 'Mary's 'sleep // 'Jesus
could take to 'heaven his mother 'Mary's ,body /
be'fore it had gone to degene'ration and de'cay //

And we be'lieve that he 'did it // What St Ira,neus /
again a 'Father of the Church says about ,Mary's
Assumption is / that what was 'bound by the sin of
diso'bedience by ,Eve / 'Mary 'liberated by her
o'bedience // Thus 'Blessed Virgin 'Mary proves to
be the su'blime e'xample of 'freedom //

'Physical ,freedom / com'prising all 'aspects of
,life on earth / should be co'nsidered as an anti-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

ci'pation of the 'perfect or 'full freedom one is to en'joy in 'life after `death // One gets the 'foretaste of 'heavenly ,bliss / when one is 'led by the `Spirit of God // The 'life of 'Mary our ,Mother / is a su'blime `testimony to this truth // After su'rrendering herself com'pletely to ,God's will / 'never did she su'ccumb to 'worldly 'fancies and de'sires / thus 'not putting on a `slave's attire // 'Till her de'parture from the ,world / she had 'only 'one thing to 'utter by way of re'sponse to God's `call / `fiat / let it `be done // She 'knew that her 'son Jesus was `God's Son / and bearing ,this in mind / she a,pproached him saying / They have no `wine // And on being given a 'rather 'cold ,answer / to her im'plicitly 'urgent re,quest / she said to the ,servants / 'Do whatever he `tells you // 'This was what she had al'ready been 'doing in her ,life / be'fore the 'wedding in ,Cana of Galilee / and 'was doing through'out her `life thereafter / and 'thus enjoy-ing 'perfect ,freedom / during her 'life on `earth // During her ,life on earth / 'one end of the 'ladder of freedom that ,she was / 'always touched the `earth / and the ,other / the `heaven // Her re,quest / They have no `wine / repre'sents her hu'manity / and her di,rection / 'Do whatever he `tells you / her di'vinity // And the 'first 'miracle that 'Jesus worked in his public 'life must be ,seen / as the re'-

sult of the 'happy 'blending of the hu'manity and di,vinity / in 'Mary's 'powerful re'quest and medi'ation to ,solve the crisis / a'ccompanied by the un'questioning coope'ration of the be'lieving servants with her media'tion // And we 'know the 'miracle brought 'forth a su'perior or ,better wine / to the de'light of the wedding `guests //

'Every 'Christian is to live his/her ,life on earth / in accordance with 'God's `word // We the 'children of God must be 'able to say as ,Mary was / Let it 'be with ,me / according to `your word (Lk 1:38) // We have been told by ,Christ our Lord / If you con,tinue in my word / you are 'truly my di'sciples / and you will ,know the truth / and the 'truth will make you `free (Jn 8: 31, 32) // 'Therefore dear 'brothers and ,sisters / being 'liberated ,in Christ / and a'ssisted with medi'ation by Mother ,Mary / 'let's go a,head / by giving 'witness to 'true and 'real Christian ,freedom / during our `life on earth // As 'citizens of the ,country / let's ex'press our patri,otism / by ful'filling our 'duties and obli'gations to the `country // With the con,viction / that mere 'physical or po'litical ,freedom / 'doesn't bring us ,fullness of freedom / let's 'grow in the 'freedom of the ,children of God / and the 'fullness of freedom of 'Mary assumed

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

into `heaven // `Hail / Holy ,Mary / & `Jai Bharat
`Matha //

Jn 2:13–22

As we all ,know / to'day we enter u'pon the third 'week of the li'turgical ,season / Dedi'cation of the `church // Church our ,mother / through today's 'readings from sacred ,scripture / is providing us 'food for ,thought on church / starting 'right from the O,T times / down to the one that would be handed 'on to 'God the ,Father / towards the `end of times //

To be,gin with / the 'temple of Je'rusalem is brought to our a,ttention / that was 'built by the 'Israelites for the 'worship of ,Yahweh / in OT `times // It was their 'custom to get to'gether in Je,rusalem / for cele'bration of the Feast of `Pas-sover // During 'this festival ,period / the high 'priest would 'enter the 'Holy ,Place of the temple / and 'sacrifice a ,goat or sheep / in propiti'ation of his ,sins / and 'those of the `people // Thus 'only the high 'priest was en'titled to enter the Holy 'Place of the ,temple / and 'that only `once a year //

It was in such a ,context / that 'Jesus entered the Je'rusalem temple // The ex'ternal 'glitter and 'grandeur characteristic of the ,feast / was 'very much on `show then // But Jesus ,noticed / sort of a 'spiritual 'vacuum or 'bankruptcy pre`vailing there // So He was getting 'ready to `purify the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

temple // Having made a 'whip of ,cords / He 'drove all the 'traders of ,sheep / ,cattle / and ,doves / ,out of the temple / along with the 'animals and the 'birds // He also poured 'out the 'coins of the ,money-changers / and over'turned their tables (v. 15) // Along with purifi'cation of the ,temple / Lord 'Jesus set 'free all those ,creatures / set for 'sale and 'sacrifice // 'This speaks of the 'birth of a 'new `age // In 'place of the im'perfect ,sacrifice / offered by the High 'priest in propiti-ation of ,sins / in the 'Holy place of the old ,age / 'here is Lord 'Jesus / who 'obtained e'ternal re'de-mption for us / by 'breaking open the 'door of the `new age / and on ,entering into it / offered Him'-self as ,sacrifice / 'once and for `all // No 'more are 'needed here,after / the 'sacrifices of old with ,sheep / ,cattle / and `doves // In the ,new age / 'people who count are the `true worshippers / who 'worship God the ,Father / in 'spirit and `truth // Here 'Jesus is 'highlighting the 'glory of the ,house of God / sig'nificance of the title of ,priesthood / and 'nature of the 'real and `perfect sacrifice // In the ,new age / Jesus Him'self is the ,Temple / (the ,church) / the ,priest / and the `sacrifice // 'That's why He ,stated / De'stroy this `temple / and I will 'raise it a'gain wi'thin three `days // 'Here the E'vangelist makes it ,clear / that what 'Jesus 'meant

by temple was 'He Him`self // 'Jesus through His
 'death by cruci,fixion / gave 'birth to a`nother
 temple / and 'that is the `church // The 'Fathers of
 church ,teach us / that the 'blood and water that
 'flowed from His 'side at cruci,fixion / 'signifies
 'birth of the church // Just as He went 'though
 'sufferings and ,died on the cross / He was 'glori-
 fied through His Resurr`ection // And 'this is the
 glorifi,cation / the 'church that 'Jesus gave ,birth to
 / is `heading for // 'That's why the ,church is called
 / a 'pilgrim `church // The 'pilgrimage of the
 'church is to reach its com,pletion / at the 'end of
 the ,age / when 'all the 'children of the 'church will
 get to'gether in `Heaven //

In the context of 'these re,alities / let's re'flect a
 little on the 'present 'state of our 'parish `church //
 Our parish 'church is the 'sign of ,Christ / con-
 tinu'ation of the 'sign of Christ the ,temple / and
 'sign of the 'children of church that we `are // It is
 'Christ Himself who offers ,sacrifice / at the 'Holy
 `Place of this church // We 'do participate in `His
 sacrifice // But we 'often come to this 'Holy 'Place
 light ,heartedly / 'just to observe a 'day of obli`ga-
 tion // In O,T times / people 'trekked very long
 'distances heading for Je`rusalem temple // What
 `for // To take 'part in the 'offering of an im`per-
 fect sacrifice // But 'here in the ,church / when the

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'perfect 'sacrifice of the ,Lord is being offered / are
we 'sure we have turned 'up to par,ticipate in it /
with 'due prepa'ration and dispo,sition // Now we
'are to make a sin'cere exami'nation of `conscience
//

We saw that both 'Christ and His 'Church are
the `Temple of God // If ,so / each 'one of us con-
stitutes for 'sure a ,house of God / or a `temple of
God // St ,Paul asks / 'Don't you 'know you are the
,temple of God / and that the 'Holy 'Spirit has His
`dwelling in you // A 'church is the a,bode /
wherein 'God has His `dwelling // He 'wants it to
be `holy // We probably 'feel like con'gratulating
the 'Lord for wielding the ,whip of cords / when
He 'saw 'violence and o,ppression / in'justice and
de,ceit / in the Je`rusalem temple // But 'think of
the ,state of affairs / prevailing in the 'temple that
`we are // 'Don't we give the 'Lord Jesus o'ccasions
to wield the `whip // If the 'Lord doesn't ,do so /
be `sure / that it is 'not because of our 'worth or
`merit / but thanks to 'His sheer `mercy //

So 'dear 'brothers and 'sisters in ,Jesus / this
li'turgical 'season of Dedi,cation of the church / is
the oppor'tunity given to us to `purify ourselves //
At the 'end of the ,age / 'God forbid that ,we be
cast out / when the 'Lord hands 'on His church
re,deemed / to 'God the Father Al'mighty // 'Let's

make the 'best 'use of this oppor,tunity / that the
'church our ,mother has given us / to 'ponder and
take 'appropriate de,cisions / so as to 'help our
'growth in `grace //

Jn 3:14–21



God 'so ,loved the world / that he gave his 'only
'son / so that 'everyone who believes in ,him / may
not `persih / but may have 'eteranal `life (v. 16)



We are 'people who 'really be,lieve / that
the 'Son of God who became a human
,being / is the 'Saviour who came to
'liberate ,man / from the 'slavery of `sin // We are
'now going 'through the li'turgical ,season /
e,piphany / in which 'Jesus re'veals to us 'God the
,Father / by leading the 'life of ,Son of God /
through his 'words and 'deeds of `power // The
'Holy 'Church in,vites us / to 'live our life by
,knowing / ,loving / and 'imitating Lord ,Jesus /
who 'came to us as the ,light / the ,way / and the
,life / by un'folding to us the ,different 'facets of
his perso,nality / through the 'scriptural 'read-
ings of this `season //

A 'large number of 'people be'lieved in ,Jesus /
after having 'witnessed his 'deeds of ,power / on
the 'feast of 'Passover in Je`rusalem // A 'promin-
ent 'person among them was Nico`demus // He
came to ,Jesus / and ex'pressed his `faith in the
Lord //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

But Lord 'Jesus makes it 'clear in the gospel 'passage we just ,listened to / that the 'faith expressed by Nico'demus was 'not 'really a com'plete one / and through the conver'sation that ,follows / tries to 'lead him to a com'plete Christian 'fiath // In 'this gospel ,episode / Lord 'Jesus 'clearly re,veals / what 'real life of 'faith should be ,like / and what its 'forms and mani-fest'tations `are //

'Son of God is the 'one who came from 'heaven // Only ,through Him / acc'ess to 'life e'ternal is `possible // In confir'mation of this ,truth / 'Moses in the O,T / in a'ccordance with 'Lord's co,mmand / made a 'serpent of ,bronze / and 'put it upon a ,pole / and 'saved the 'children of 'Israel from `snake-bite (Numbers 21:9) // So 'also whoever be'lieves in Jesus is `sure to be saved // 'Just as the bronze 'serpent was 'lifted upon a ,pole / Jesus as 'well is going to be `lifted // The 'person who be,lieves in God / finds sal'vation and 'entry into the `Kingdom of God //

'Faith ,means / 'welcoming the ,Love of God / funda'mentally ex'pressed in 'sending His 'Son a'mong us // His 'presence is the 'measure of God's 'love for the `world (v. 16) // 'Faith means 'welcoming 'this love which ,saves us / and gives us e'ternal 'life as of `now // God's sal'vific 'will ex-

'cludes `no one / it 'reaches out to every human
 'being (v. 17) // How,ever / this 'plan must be
 'freely ac`cepted // In some ,way / re`jecting it is
 con`demning oneself (v. 18) / it is pre`ferring the
 'darkness to the `light (v. 19) // 'Christ is the `light /
 and 'darkness is the 'world re`jecting ,Christ /
 God's `love //

'John the e'vangelist makes it ,clear / 'people
 re`fuse the light / because their 'deeds are `evil (v.
 19) // 'Deeds are e'ssential in matters of `faith //
 'Hating the 'light and doing e'vil ,deeds / are
 sy`nonymous (v. 20) // More,over / some re`fuse to
 `come to the light / so that their 'deeds may not be
 ex`posed (v. 20) // The gospel 'passage con'cludes
 with a de'cisive `statement / those who 'do what is
 ,true / `come to the light // The 'truth in,volves /
 not 'only ,thinking / ac'cepting things inte`lectu-
 ally / but 'also `doing // It 'has to be 'translated
 into con'crete ,gestures / co,mmitment / and
 soli'darity with 'people //

To'day there takes 'place in the ,world / a 'fierce
 'struggle between the 'light and the `darkness //
 We 'see among indi,viduals / co'mmunities and
 ,nations / the 'tendencies to 'form themselves into
 'several ,groups / in 'order to blow 'out the light of
 'truth and 'goodness in the `world // 'This is made
 'evident by i'mmoral legis,lations / elimi'nation of

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'advocates of ,peace / and in'dulgence by in-
di'viduals in 'heinous ,acts / with no 'sense for
'truth and `goodness // 'Hasn't a 'follower of
'Christ 'living in such ,world / or a be'liever 'living
for the 'kingdom of 'heaven anything to `do at this
juncture // 'Yes / 'he or 'she is to get ,strengthened /
so as to be 'able to light the 'lamp in `darkness //
For 'that to be made ,possible / we should be 'will-
ing to re'ceive the manifes'tations of the 'real
,truth / that Jesus the 'Lord de'mands of us // It is
'not e,nough / that we are bap'tized in 'water and
'spirit / but 'should be 'able to live 'up to the 'faith
we have re`ceived //

By way of re'minding the bronze 'serpent in
the O,T / Christ the 'Lord is 'also raised in the N'T
// If we 'look at ,Christ / and 'act in accordance
with his 'holy 'words of ,teaching / we would be
'moving along the 'path of 'light and `truth //

'Truth a'lone can have 'close ac'cess to the
'light // 'Evil is the 'child of `darkness // God's 'p-
resence is 'not at `all there // Therefore 'we who
have 're'ceived God's ,life / are to lead a 'life of
'truth and `goodness // Keeping a'way from the
'thick 'darkness of ,ignorance / trans'gressions
against ,love of God / and in 'fellowship with hu-
man ,beings / let's 'strive to 'live along the 'path of
ever'shining ,goodness / 'love for ,God / 'fellow-

ship among ,men / and 'sanctity of `life / and
there'by living like `children of God //

Jn 3:22–4:3



The 'One who comes from a'bove is above `all /
the 'one who is of the ,earth / be,ongs to the earth
/ and 'speaks about `earthly things // (Jn 3:31)



Though the 'Israelites had 'nothing to take
,pride in / and 'though they fell 'short of
the 'dignity of being the ,chosen people /
'Yahvey 'still remains to be their `Saviour // 'Sin
has no 'place in the 'presence of `love // The ,Laws
/ the ,Prophets / the ,Kings / and the 'real 'Saviour
,Jesus / are 'all the 'symbols of `love indeed // This
i'dea is 'amply ,explicated / in to'day's scriptural
`readings //

During the 'journey to the 'promised 'land /
the 'people who for'got 'God and His ,ways / are
given 'punishment and `penance // But in the
book Deute'ronomy ch 2,4 / '9-2,2 / we 'come
across a situ,ation / where the 'people thirsting for
sal'vation had to 'face se'vere ,laws / by way of
'punishment and rep'aration for their `sins // The
'people who entered into a 'covenant relationship
with ,God / indulged in di'ssensions and idol ,wor-
ship / wi'thout caring to ob'serve the 'sanctity of
the re'lationship with God / and 'thus came to

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'suffer 'God's `punishment // 'Rules and regu'la-
tions are laid 'down in the `passage / so that
'people who were 'liberated from cap,tivity / may
'not be caught a'gain in `tragedy //

In I'saiah ch 6,3 / '7-1,6 / we have the ,words of
the prophet / en'gendering 'hope in those who are
'back to 'Israel after ca`ptivity // 'Here the
prophet's ,words / 'point to the 'ultimate sal'vation
leading to libe'ration and ,freedom / that makes it
'possible for ,men / to ob'tain a 'new 'earth and a
'new ,heaven / through the 'practice of 'truth and
,justice / and 'real `worship // Yes as the 'verse 1,6
tells us / You O ,Lord / are our `Father / our
Re'deemer of 'old is your `name //

In the 'N,T / 'Jesus who is ful'filment of ,love /
turns 'out to be the `Saviour // He is the 'eternal
'high priest // Through his self-'sacrifice offered
only ,once / for'giveness of 'sins and sal'vation
have been made `possible // The 'author of the
e,pistle / in'vites the 'people thirsting for sal,vation
/ to 'Christ the e'ternal ,high priest / the 'one who
is ,seated / at the 'right hand of the 'throne of the
'Majesty in the `heavens / and to the 'thought
about his 'second `coming (Heb 8:1-9:10) //

For'giveness of 'sins and sal'vation have been
ob,tained / through the 'only e'ternal 'sacrifice
offered by `Christ // This is to ful'fil the 'will of

,God / the `Father // Through the `sacrifice by
 `Christ in the N,T / `sins are `blotted out for `good
 // I will re`member their `sins no `more (v. 12) // Be-
 cause of this self-,confidence / `we `on with `Jesus'
 holy ,cross / have ac`cess to the `sanctuary and the
 `true ,tent / that the `Lord has set `up (v. 2) // Here
 the exhor`tation is made ,clear to us / that `we who
 have `known the ,truth / should no `more `sin //

In the gospel ,passage / we see `Jesus entering
 the ,scene / to pro`claim the `Kingdom of ,God /
 with John the `Baptist as his fore`runner // The
 `mission of Jesus is made `clear in the ,words / that
 `entry into the `Kingdom of `God is im,possible /
 wi`thout one being `born of `water and `Spirit /
 thus `emphazising the `need of a `new ,birth /
 through con`trition and re`pentance // `John as the
 ,herald of Jesus / prepared the `way for people for
 re`pentance //

On `Jesus' `entry on the ,scene / `John
 pro`claims the di`vinity and heavenly `status of `Je-
 sus to his own di`sciples // Thus in a`cordance
 with God's ,plan / the Bap`tizer was giving `way to
 Jesus // `Yes / when the `sun is on the ,rise / the
 `moon is on the `wane //

`Jesus is `witness to `heaven / the `one who
 `comes from heaven // Therefore He is above `all
 // The Bap`tizer is only a `witness to the `world //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

He gives ,testimony / in the light of the reve'la-
tions reaching him from a`bove // ,Jesus on the
contrary / 'testifies to what he has 'seen and 'heard
in heaven in `person // Therefore pay 'heed to his
,call to people / that his 'testimony is 'true and to
be ac`cepted // But ,sad to say / 'no one accepts
His `testimony // Whoever does'not accept will be
`punished // ,Jesus / being in po'ssession of the
,fullness of Spirit / gives it to 'others without
`measure // Whoever be'lieves in the ,Son / is
given the 'Spirit without `measure // And we are
'saved through ,faith in the Son / and in the ,grace
of the Holy Spirit / 'given to us without `measure /
that is in a`bundance //

So having ac'cepted Jesus who is from a,bove /
let's re'ceive the Holy ,Spirit / his `gift to us / and
'thus have ,in us / 'life e`ternal //

Jn 7:37–39 / 8:12–20

The 'subject of our meditative re,flection today / is the 'two 'statements made by ,Jesus / in the 'context of the festival of 'booths celebrated among the `Jews /



Let 'anyone who is 'thirsty come to `me / and let the one who be'lieves in me `drink // As the ,Scripture has said / out of the be,lievers heart / shall 'flow rivers of `living water // (Jn 7:37-38)
'I am the `light of the world // whoever ,follows me / will 'never walk in ,darkness / but will have the 'light of `life // (Jn 8:12)



The 'Jews observed a 'week-long cele'bration of the 'final 'day of the festival of `Booths // The 'highlight of the celebration on the 'day was 'bringing bowl of 'water from the pond of Shi'loah to the ,Temple / and 'High Priest 'adding to it as 'much a measure of ,wine / and 'then pouring it 'down on the 'altar for burnt `offerings // 'This re'ligious ceremony of a,blution was performed / as a 'prayer to e'ffect enough 'rains for the 'next `year // The Jews 'also be,lieved / that at the ,end of days / a 'stream of ,life / will 'flow out of this `altar // The 'prophecy of ,Joel (3:18) / that A 'fountain shall

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

come 'forth from the 'house of the Lord / and of Zecha,riah (14:8) / that On ,that day / 'living waters shall 'flow out from Je`rusalem / carry 'this i`dea //

The exhor'tation from ,Jesus / Let 'anyone who is 'thirsty come to `me / came probably the 'moment the High 'Priest performed the ab`lution ceremony // 'Jesus' 'words ,signify / not the `prayer for ,rains / as in'tended by the `ritual of ablution // With the ,coming of Jesus / the si`gnificance of ablution is `lost // As he makes it ,clear / the 'source of living 'water to en'liven the ,world / is 'he him`self // Jesus is the 'source of the ,living water / that 'satiates the inner 'thirst of human ,soul / a'spiring to reach per`fection / the living 'water that 'frees 'man from all 'sorts of dis'tress and dis`comfort // The one who 'drinks of the water that ,Jesus gives / will `never be thirsty (Jn 4:14) // The water that ,I will give / will become in them a ,spring of water / 'gushing up to eternal `life // These 'words of Jesus spoken to the Sa'maritan ,woman / make this truth `clear //

The 'living water that 'Jesus gives is the 'Holy 'Spirit // The 'blood and water that came 'out from ,Jesus' side / 'signify the sacraments of 'baptism and Blessed `Sacrament // 'Those who get 'close to Jesus through sacra,mental life / are given the 'gift of Holy `Spirit //

Jesus re'vealed that He is the ,light of the world / in the 'context of the 'bright ,light / sent out by the me'norah / ('huge ,lights / 'fixed around / the ,temple / to brighten the 'premises and ,places around) in co'nnection with the 'festival of 'Booths // These menorah' would make them re'c- all the e'vent of 'Yahweh guiding their ,forbears / with 'pillars of ,fire / as they were 'travelling through the 'desert in the dark of `night // It may ,also be recalled / that the 'Jews made a ,bonfire as well / by 'burning the ,branches of trees / used for 'building the `booths // The 'bonfire was 'organ- ized on the 'final ,day / when the o'fficial decla'ra- tion of the con`clusion of the festival was made //

The 'words of 'John the e,vangelist / in the in- tro'ductory part of his ,gospel / The ,true light / which en'lightens ,everyone / was `coming into the world / are si'gnificant here // Just as the 'sun sends out 'light and 'heat to the 'flora and ,fauna / in the ,life of the grace / Lord 'Jesus the ,Son of God / gives 'light and 'strength to `men // What 'Jesus gave 'out was 'light of life to ,mankind / who were 'groping in the `darkness of sin // He is the 'saviour of the ,world / the 'light of all `people // 'Those who follow ,him / will not su'ccumb to powers of `darkness / for they will have 'with them the 'light of `life //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

As we all ,know / the Lenten 'season is one of re,pentance / in the li'turgical `calendar // 'Man who moved a'way from 'God by ,sin / should be 'back to God `fully // But it is 'not that 'easy for a ,man / deprived of the a,wareness of sin / to have the ex`perience of repentance // Through to'day's gospel ,passage / 'Jesus gives ,everyone / exhor'tations that lead to re`pentance // 'Jesus' 'words to 'drink from him and ,follow him / 'indicate his in-vi'tation to re`pentance // It is out of the 'heart of a re,pentant person / shall 'flow rivers of `living water // He/she will 'never walk in `darkness / be-cause they are 'filled with the `Spirit //

'Worldly 'wealth and a,chievements / do 'not give 'real satis`faction to man / his 'thirst is not `satiated by them // They often 'lead him to the `darkness // Modern 'man can find his con'tentment and 'peace in ,full / 'only in ,Jesus / the `Son of God // During 'this Lenten ,season / the 'children of church are in,vited / to the ex'perience of God pro'vided by `Jesus // 'Let's all ob'serve the ,Lent / by giving our 'free and 'positive res`ponse to this invitation //

Jn 9:1–12, 35–38



As 'long as I am in the ,world / I am the `light of
the world // (v. 5)



Men who 'love ,darkness / and ,deeds
born of darkness / come to hold 'key
po'sitions to'day in the so'ciety //
'This is a ,time / when acts of 'crime and 'violence
are on the ,rise / 'even in the name of re'ligious
'faith // 'More of what we 'read 'daily in the
,morning / in ,newspapers / are re'ports of `acts
done in darkness // It is not 'people born ,blind /
but 'those who made them,selves blind / that 'per-
petrate and per,petuate / these acts of 'crime and
'violence //

To'day's gospel ,passage / 'deals with the 'one
who was born ,blind / and 'those who made
them'selves blind with their unbe'lie'f // On a 'day
of the 'Festival of ,Lights / or the 'Festival of
Dedi,cation / in 'Hebrew known as ,Hanukkah / an
'8-day 'long Jewish cele,bration / when the ,temple
of Jerusalem / and the 'areas around were under
'such pro,fusion of light / as sent 'out from the
'huge 7-'branched Me,norah lamps / in'stalled on
'four ,sides of the temple / that 'Jesus de,clared / 'I

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

am the 'light of the world // Whoever ,follows me / will 'never walk in ,darkness / but will have the 'light of 'life (Jn 8:12) / and then 'heals the 'man born 'blind that he 'met out,side the temple / as a 'challenge as well as a 'warning to the ,Jews / who re,jected Jesus' statement / and 'thus showing their re'luctance to 'come to the ,real light / 'saying that 'Jesus 'testifies on his 'own behalf //

The 'whole of the 'public life of ,Jesus / who became ,man / in order to 'free man from the ,darkness / that crept 'into him owing to the o,ri-ginal sin / was an exhor'tation to 'come to the e'ternal light // In the 'synagogue at ,Nazareth / he 'openly de,clared / that he was a,nointed / 'also to give 'sight to the 'blind // This is 'not just 'freedom from 'physical ,blindness // What Jesus ,aims at is / an 'opening of the ,eye for / or 'insight into the 'kingdom of God and His 'righteousness // By giv-ing 'sight to the 'blindman through a ,miracle / 'Je-sus is holding ,out to us / an invi'tation to become 'heirs to a sub,lime / 'inner 'vision // 'All those ,blind people / who got 'healing from the ,Lord / came to 'this ex'perience of ,vision / and ,followed Jesus / in their 'subsequent 'life (Mt 20:34; Mk 10:52; Lk 18:43) // St ,Paul / 'known for his 'know-ledge of 'Greek phi'losophy and He'brew re,ligion / turned 'out to be a 'rich ,owner / and 'zealous

pro'ponent of this ,vision / when he was de'prived
of his ,physical sight / be'fore his con'version to
'Christian faith / and 'then came to re'gain his
,sight / and be be'stowed with 'Christian `vision /
whereas 'those who 'claimed they were ,not blind /
,loved darkness / and re'jected 'Christ the `Light //
Despite 'passage of ,centuries / 'doesn't this contra'-
diction 'still per'sist //

The 'coming of the 'man born 'blind to ,light /
is a 'spiritual `pilgrimage // The e'vangelist has
pre'sented it in such a heart'warming `manner //
The man is 'nearing 'Jesus the ,Light / step by `step
// For ,him / Jesus was 'first an 'ordinary `man (v.
11) // ,Later he said / that 'Jesus was a `prophet //
Then 'braving all oppo'sition from all ,sides / he
,firmly stated / that 'Jesus was one from `God //
'Finally the man con,fessed / that 'Jesus is for 'sure
the ,Saviour / the Me,ssiah / and `worshipped Him
//

We have 'all been 'called to take 'part in this
`pilgrimage // When ,asked by the Lord / whether
the 'man 'blind from birth be'lieved in the Son of
,Man / he re'plied that he `did believe // See the
'way one re'ceives Jesus as 'Lord and 'Saviour into
one's `life // The 'man born 'blind got 'sight and
'insight thanks to `faith // 'Those who had ,sight /
'lost 'insight / be'cause of (their) unbe'lie'f // The

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

Lord ,teaches / that 'this is 'equal to making
one ,self blind / making 'sin re'main / de'spite be-
ing a'ware of the 'presence of the 'true 'Light //
'True ,faith / like the 'sight that the 'man born
,blind received / is a 'gift from God // 'This we
have to 'seek and ,thirst for / 'humbly and
sin'cerely // For 'one to under'stand e'ternal
,truths / one has to be 'freed from the 'god of this
,world / from being 'blinded by the 'minds of
unbe'lievers (2 Cor // 4: 3-4) // To'day's second
'reading re,minds us / that un'less we come to the
,true faith / the 'same de'struction will fall u,pon
us / as the 'one on the un'fruitful 'vineyard / as
'prophesied by the prophet I'saiah (Is 5: 1-7) //

'10-'12 years of re'ligious in,struction / that we
give our ,children / is in line with the 'pilgrimage
of the 'man 'blind from 'birth / and is 'meant to be
a prepa'ration to e'nable them to ack'nowledge
,Jesus / as the 'Lord and 'Saviour in their 'lives //
Our 'children should grow ,up / step by ,step / in
'full ,knowledge about Jesus / so as they 'worship
Jesus 'knowingly // We are to 'give our all'-out
su'pport and en,couragement to them / so as they
grow 'up to this 'knowledge // Those who shy
a'way from this responsi,bility / 'share in the 'Jew-
ish 'mindset / and have 'no ex'cuse for their 'sin of

making them'selves and their ,children / 'spiritually
 'blind in their lives (Jn 15:22) //

What Jesus 'grants us is 'light e'ternal // Great
 'men like ,Buddha / ,Socrates / Con,fucius /
 Mu,hammed / ,Gandhiji / and 'others are 'great
 and en,lightened souls / who shed 'light and 'hope
 to hu'manity in `troubled times // But 'that was
 'only in `part / and therefore 'short of 'fullness
 and per'fection / as their 'thoughts e,volved / 'only
 from 'human in'telligence // They 'couldn't
 provide 'light in a`bundance / as human in'telli-
 gence is 'always `limited // While they 'shed only
 ,dim light / 'Jesus comes on the 'scene as the
 e'ternal light // As 'longer as I am in the ,world / I
 am the `light of the world (v. 5) // But he ,added /
 And re`member / I am 'with you ,always / to the
 'end of the `age (Mt 28:20) // Though we are not
 `physically ,blind / thanks to ,God's grace / 'let's all
 sing 'out in 'prayer to ,God the Father / 'Loving
 ,Father / 'do open our ,eyes in your mercy / to 'let
 us see ,Jesus / the `light of the world //

Jn 10:11-18



I am the 'good `shepherd // The 'good shepherd
lays 'down his `life for the sheep // (v. 11)



Doubts arose in the 'minds of the ,Jews /
as to 'who Jews of ,Nazareth is / the
'one who opened the ,eyes of a man /
blind from `birth // They 'asked the 'person born
,blind as well / What do `you say about him //
'Who may `he be // 'No one could give a
com'plete ,answer / a`bout Jesus // Because 'none
of the 'persons ,present are there / had 'fully un-
der`stood him // Therefore 'Lord Jesus ,taught
them / in their ,own language / for ,their sake / 'I
am the 'good `shepherd // 'I am the 'gate for the
`sheep //

As we all ,know / 'shepherd is an ,image / so
'often used in the Old `Testament // This 'word
,helped the Jews / to 'easily under'stand the
`meaning of the image // Be,sides / in the 'eastern
part of the ,world / the re'lationship between the
'shepherd and 'sheep was more 'deep and sin,cere
/ than found among the 'western `countries // The
,reason was / the 'westerners 'bred sheep for ,meat
/ and 'slaughtered them at a 'tender ,age / and 'ate

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

them up as 'food / whereas the 'people in ,eastern countries / 'reared sheep for gathering ,wool from them / and therefore the 'sheep under ,their care / enjoyed pro'tection of the ,shepherd / for a 'longer 'period //

It is in 'this 'context Jesus ,says / 'I am the 'gate for the 'sheep // The 'use of a 'gate or a 'door is in 'two ways / it is used for 'opening and 'closing // 'Jesus as well as the ,door / has a 'twofold 'mission to ful'fil in this world // He is the 'door opening to the 'presence of God the 'Father // 'Christ the 'Lord is the ,door / that leads to 'life e'ternal // But he is 'also in po'ssession of the 'right and ,power / to 'judge and 'punish this world // Thus 'Jesus the ,door / can sub'ject this 'world to 'life ever,lasting / and 'punishment that 'lasts for'ever //

Lord 'Jesus the ,Son of God / who became 'man with 'power to 'save and ,punish / is a 'good shepherd // For he is the 'one who re'ceived from ,God the Father / the 'mission of a shepherd / and thereby the ,one / 'sent by the Father // In ack,nnowledgement of this mission / Jesus ,says / Just as the 'Father sent ,me / 'I send 'you as well // The 'Saviour who carries the di'vine ,mission / keeps 'close 'contact with his ,sheep / and 'knows them 'closely // Through 'this sort of re,lationship / 'he becomes ac'ceptable to his 'sheep as well //

,Christ / the ,good shepherd / lays 'down his
 'life for the sheep // 'Through his self-su,rrrender /
 what 'Jesus ex,pressed was / the u'nique un'folding
 of his sin'cere 'love for the sheep // What in'spired
 Jesus to 'do this was the ,truth / that the 'sheep are
 his 'own // For ,this reason / the 'shepherd ,lives /
 'deeply 'interested in 'things pertaining to the
 'sheep // Because the 'shepherd 'sacrifices his ,life
 for the sheep / 'motivated by the 'deep love-re'la-
 tionship between the 'shepherd and ,sheep / the
 sheep are 'saved from the clutches of 'death and
 de'struction / and are e'nabled to 'enter into 'life
 e'ternal // For the 'shepherd has ,come / that 'they
 may have ,life / and have it in 'plenty' //

What is re'quired of a di'sciple of Christ / now
 going 'through the 'Lenten season of the li'turgical
 ,calendar is / the 'love of ,Christ / the 'good shep-
 herd // 'Every 'Christian is 'now to take a de,cision
 / as to becoming a 'good sheep in ,Jesus' sheepfold
 / and there'by get 'into life e'ternal / 'through Jesus
 the ,Gate / the 'way // For ,that / the di'sciple of
 Christ should 'listen to the ,voice of Jesus / the
 'shepherd // On listening to the ,voice of the
 shepherd / the disciple 'recognizes the 'shepherd
 himself // Once the shepherd is ,recognized / the
 'person turns 'out to be a di'sciple 'ready to follow
 ,him / and through that di'scipleship / the 'person

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

comes to a 'mutual `knowledge with the shepherd
/ and thus a 'mutual re'lationship is e`stablished //
'Then every ,Christian can say / The 'Lord is my
`shepherd / there is 'nothing I shall `want (Ps 23:11)
//

Jn 14:1–14



'I am the ,way / and the ,truth / and the `life // 'No
one comes to the ,Father / ex'cept through `me //

(v. 6)



After the ob'servance of Holy ,Week / co'm-
memorating the 'death and resurr'ection
of ,Christ the Lord / that made sal'vation
of 'mankind ,possible / we 'enter upon the 'third
'Sunday of the season of resurr'ection // On this
o,ccasion / the mother 'church re,minds us / of the
'need of a 'spiritual ,life / well 'centred in `Christ
Jesus // As we ,know / John's 'gospel is 'one written
for ,those / ma'tured in 'faith in the `Lord Jesus //
A su'blime 'verse from ,that gospel / is the 'topic of
our re'flection and medi'tation to`day / 'I am the
,way / and the ,truth / and `life //

To'day's three 'readings 'point to ,Jesus / who's
the ,way / the ,truth / and the `life // In the 'closing
'chapters of the 'book of Prophet I,saiah / we can
see ,God / who reaches 'out in his 'mercy to grant
sal'vation // The 'servant who 'emptied himself
(54) for the sal'vation of ,people / 'calls them to
him,self / with the 'message of un'ceasing `love //
One 'who main'tains ,justice / and 'does what is

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,right / whether the 'person be a 'foreigner or ,eunuch / 'everyone has a 'place in his 'house of 'prayer (55) // The 'prophet is here de'picting 'heavenly 'life as a house of ,prayer / that can a'ccommodate all who hold 'fast the 'covenant //

The 'earthly 'form of 'this heavenly 'home is the 'early ,church / that we 'see in the 'second reading // What 'joy it was for the a,postles then / to receive 'lashes and suffer humili'ation in the 'name of Jesus // How ,zealous they were / to pro'claim every 'day in the 'church and every ,home / that 'Jesus is the 'real 'Saviour // It was this 'zeal and 'fervour for ,Christ the Lord / that in'spires St 'Paul to be all 'praise for the sal'vific ,plan / that 'God the Father 'executed through 'Christ the 'Saviour // In the ,third reading / apostle 'Paul through his e,pistle / draws 'up 'God the heavenly ,Father / who 'reconciles 'everything in the 'universe in Jesus ,Christ / and 'every be,liever / who par'takes in 'God the Father's 'glory and ,praise / 'freely be'stowed in his Be,loved / and in being 'marked with the 'seal of the Holy 'Spirit //

We can find 'out the 'mission of Christ the ,Lord / the central 'point of the ,universe / from 'words that He him'self said // His de'parture from the 'world being ,imminent / the 'Lord starts 'comforting his di'sciples // To be,gin with / He

'speaks about the ,dwelling place / that he is going to pre'pare for ,them / in His 'Father's `House // There are 'many dwelling `places here // Once he has 'gone and prepared a ,place for them / he will come a,gain / and 'take them to him`self // 'Every-one has dwelling 'place in the `Father's house // 'That dwelling ,place / is nothing other than 'every di,sdisciple of Christ / who becomes 'worthy of 'entry into the 'heavenly a`bode // There will 'not be any 'dearth of dwelling `places // But 'those who ,reach there / will 'not be `many //

,Seondly / what is ,noteworthy is / the 'answer the 'Lord gives ,Thomas / who 'asks for the 'way leading to the `Father's house // 'I am the ,way / and the ,truth / and the `life // `Yes / Jesus is the 'way to the `Father // We 'go to the Father through ,Jesus / whose 'life and ,message tell us / that the 'way is the 'practice of 'loving 'God and `others // 'Such a path repre'sents a 'daily `exigency // Being ,with Jesus / is being `with the Father // The 'truth always 'signifies `Jesus // We have to ac'cept the ,truth / and the 'content of Jesus `message / and as 'John himself ,says / we 'must put it into ,practice / in 'order to come to the `light / a'nother major Jo'hannine `theme (3:21) // Those who re'ject the ,testimony of Jesus / the ,living stone / (1 Pet 2:4) u'pon which we must 'build our 'Christian e,xistence

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

/ are 'living a 'lie // The 'ultimate 'meaning of Jesus' 'witness is ,life / which 'comes from the ,Father / and makes us 'God's 'children (Jn 1) // In a situ'ation of di,sease / ,hunger / ,pain / and isol,ation / giving 'life is putting into 'practice the ,truth / that 'Jesus re,veals to us / and 'starting on our 'way to the 'Father //

Then ,thirdly / the 'Lord reveals the 'new stream of love rel,ationship / running through Christ's di,sciple / ,Christ / and the 'Father // He pro'claims a 'God who is 'close to us // We know ,him / by knowing 'Jesus / and / ,seeing him / we see the 'Father who 'sent him (v.7) // 'Philip has 'not under'stood that // Jesus re,sponds / by rea'firming his 'deep 'oneness with the Father / his 'works re'veal him (v. 11) // 'Works should 'also be the ex'pression of our 'faith // Be'lieving in 'Jesus is doing the ,works / that 'he does (v. 12) // 'Thus we will form 'part of 'God's own 'People (1 Pet 4:9) //

The 'one who ,lives in Jesus / by doing his 'works is 'never a'lone / nor an 'orphan / he has 'very 'clear 'path to walk along // And 'that path is the 'only ,truth / through which he reaches 'life e'ternal // 'That is the conso'lation and ,peace / that 'Christ the Lord 'gives / Do 'not let your

'hearts be `troubled // Be'lieve in `God / believe
'also in `me (v. 1) //

'Man today is in 'frantic 'search for ,peace /
running helter-'skelter in the `world / and in
to'day's Co'rona pan'demic world sce,nario /
spending ,time / locked 'down in an'xiety and
'restlessness // 'Some people go 'after 'sedative
,drugs / 'others after some a'scetic 'practices last-
ing for a 'short `period / still 'others finding satis'-
faction in going on `pilgrimages // There is 'only
,one way / for one to ob'tain and en'joy never-
'ending `peace / 'listen to ,Christ / the ,way / the
,truth / and the `life // 'Live in `truth // ,If so / just
as He ,says / 'No one will take your 'joy from `you
(Jn 16:22) //

Jn 14:18–24



I will 'not leave you `orphaned / I am `coming to
you // (Jn 14:18)



The ex'perience of feeling ,orphaned / is
'really `painful // But it is 'not re'stricted
to ,children / without 'living 'parents dur-
ing their 'life on `earth // 'Many are there who
,feel / they are thrown into ,life / with 'nothing or
'nobody to hold ,on to / 'quite un'certain what 'life
is all `about / e'specially when 'buffeted by the ex-
pec'tations and de'mands of `others // The good
'news that the e'vangelist 'John brings from his
ex,perience / and ,shares with us is / that we are
'not `orphans / we are 'held wi'thin the love re,la-
tionship / e'xisting in the 'family of `Triune God //

But our co'mmunion with the 'family of the
,Triune God / is 'not one to be taken for ,granted /
in a light-'hearted `way // For 'that co'mmunion of
'love to be our ex,perience / as 'Jesus 'tells us in
to'day's gospel ,passage / we have to 'first 'prove
our ,love to Him / by o'beying the co'mmand-
ments He has `given us // When we have ,done
that / we will be 'loved by 'God the ,Father / with

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

the 'Father and the 'Son making their a'bode in us
//

The 'next 'requisite for our co'mmunion with the 'Father and ,Son is / that we 'have to be 'ever 'open to the 'coming of the 'Holy ,Spirit / who 'comes from the 'Father to us at 'Jesus' re,request / to re'place Him (Jesus) in our ,lives / after His 'bodily de'parture from the `world / ,that is / His A'scension //

The 'role of the Holy 'Spirit in our ,lives / is that of a `Paraclete (Gk – a ,counsellor / an 'advocate to 'argue our 'innocence be'fore a ,judge / a ,helper / a `comforter) // All 'these kinds of 'work that ,Paraclete does / re'flect Jesus' own 'work on our be'half // It is the Holy ,Spirit / who on 'Jesus' com'pletion of His 'earthly ,ministry / 'binds us to 'God in 'Christ for`ever // It is ,He (the Holy Spirit) / being 'with the 'Church for,ever / in the 'place of ,Jesus Himself / 'binds us to ,God / teaches us 'truth that the 'world cannot compre'hend / and re'veals Jesus' ,presence / beyond the imagi'nation of ,those / who have 'not re`ceived Him // The same 'Spirit en,sures / that when we 'keep the co'mmandment of 'Jesus to ,love / we be'come His 'brothers and ,sisters / and the 'sons and 'daughters of 'God the ,Father / through his 'Son Jesus `Christ // And it is 'this 'mystical love ex'perience

of being 'bound to 'God the Father in ,Christ /
 through the 'work of the 'Holy 'Spirit in the
 ,Church / that made the 'mystic ,Saint / and 'Doc-
 tor of the 'Church Te'resa of A'vila u'tter in
 ec,static pride / 'I am the 'daughter of the `Church
 //

All the be'lievers being 'sons and 'daughters of
 the 'Church on ,earth / 'joyful Festal 'greetings to
 ,all of them / as the 'Church 'celebrated today the
 'Heavenly 'Feast of St Te'resa of ,Avila / the 'Doctor
 and `Daughter of the Church //

Jn 16:5–15



I 'still have 'many things to `say to you / but you cannot `bear them ,now // When the Spirit of ,truth comes / he will 'guide you into `all the truth / for he will 'not speak on his `own / but will 'speak whatever he `hears / and he will de'clare to you the 'things that are to `come // (vv. 12, 13)



Pentecost is one of the 'great Christian `feasts // On ,this feast / we co'mmemorate the 'advent of the Holy `Spirit // In 'Acts ch ,2 / 1–4 we read / When the 'day of Pentecost had ,come / they were 'all to'gether in `one place // And 'suddenly from ,heaven / there came a 'sound like the 'rush of a 'violent `wind / and it 'filled the entire 'house where they were `sitting // Di'vided ,tongues / as of `fire / a'ppeared a`mong them / and a 'tongue 'rested on `each of them // 'All of them were 'filled with the Holy `Spirit //

In 'Lk ch '1:3,5 / we are told a'bout Jesus' 'birth by the 'power of the Holy `Spirit // As told in 'Lk ,3 / 5,2 / in ,Baptism / the Holy 'Spirit descended u'pon him / in 'bodily form like a `dove // 'Mark's gospel '1:12 says / the 'Spirit drove him 'out into the `wilderness / and that 'Jesus was tempted by

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Satan / but he over'came the ,tempter / following which the 'angels waited `on him // It was with the 'power of the ,Spirit / that he 'cured ,many / sick with 'various di,seases / and cast out 'many `demons // His 'words were 'full of the `Spirit // Jesus re'joiced in the Holy ,Spirit / and 'thanked the `Father (Lk 10:21) // The Holy 'Spirit was 'al-ways with him // He was called the Me,ssiah/ meaning `Christ / be'cause he was a'nointed by the Holy 'Spirit and his `power // Jesus 'promised to his di'sciples and their 'followers the 'same spirit as he him'self re'ceived //

Di'sciples re'ceive the Holy `Spirit

The di'sciples were 'saddened by the `death of Jesus // They 'stayed in,doors / so 'frightened and 'shuddered at the 'thought of stepping 'out into the so'ciety // 'Still they gathered to'gether to `pray // After ,days together / the Holy 'Spirit res-ted ,on them / in the form of di'vided ,tongues / as of `fire // The 'Spirit got them 'melted and well ,moulded / and trans'formed into 'new `beings // A 'new cre'ation so to say took `place // They got their 'intellect en'lightened // They got con'vinced of their ,mission / with the under'standing of Je-sus' 'life and resurr'ection // They 'gained a clear 'vision of their `call in life // And not `only ,that / in a 'manner that goes be'yond and human ,power

/ they got 'strength enough to e'ffect a 'change in
 the ,history / the ,times / and the `regions around
 // They were trans'formed into sort of 'fireballs
 burning by the `Spirit // Their 'works proved to be
 'fire capable of 'melting indi'viduals and
 co,munities / in the 'furnace of the 'new `king-
 dom // 'Thousands came 'forward to re,ceive
 Christ / and were 'filled with the `Spirit //

A ,Christian / an a'bode of the Holy `Spirit

'Pentecost ex'perience was ,meant / not 'only to
 the di'sciples // It was his 'advent into ,history / in
 view of 'all `peoples // 'Jesus has pro'vided the
 Holy ,Spirit / for the 'whole of the `Church // The
 Church e'xists and keeps ,growing / 'not because
 of 'human calcu,lations / a'bilities of ,Christians /
 or on the 'goodwill or gene'rosity of poli'ticians /
 but 'only thanks to the 'working of the Holy `Spirit
 // The 'growth and de'velopment is de,termined /
 'not by her fi'nancial po'sition or in`vestment / or
 in terms of her edu'cational insti'tutions and or-
 gani`sations / but by the 'growth of the ,children
 of the church / and 'other believers ,in Jesus /
 be'stowed with the 'gifts and `fruits of the Spirit //
 The 'wealth of the church is 'not the ,money in
 possession / or the 'visible `structures of church /
 but the 'real and 'genuine be,lievers / 'worshipping

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'God in 'truth and `Spirit // ,Money / church
,structures / edu'cational and 'other insti,tutions /
are mere `instruments / just like the 'chisel in the
'hand of `carpenter // The 'chisel will 'not produce
de'sired re,sults / un'less it is 'properly 'handled by
the arti'san // Not `only ,that / the mis'handling
will bring in di'sastrous results // In this ,context /
let's e,xamine / whether my 'church has come to
'suffer 'setbacks or `failures // 'How come that the
'church has to con'front many ,challenges / or al-
le'gations a'gainst it // De'spite the ac'tivities of
the church for ,centuries / so 'much of 'evil 'flour-
ishes in the `world / and so 'many 'families disin-
tegrate // May 'Pentecost ex'perience make us
'really a`ware of things //

The 'church is 'guided by the Holy ,Spirit /
through the `children of the church // The 'Spirit
cannot ,work through them / if they re'ly 'only on
human in,telligence / human ,knowledge / and are
'proudly 'selfish to the `core // They are 'stumbling
blocks for the 'Spirit to work `through // These
'people would take 'up some ac'tivities / but
ne'glecting the 'real ,goal / with 'no deep con'ne-
ction about their `call in life // To all ex'ternal
a,ppearance / they seem to 'foster the ,growth of
the church / but from in`side / they 'really re`tard
the growth // Re,sult // The 'church and its ac'tiv-

ities will re'main just a ,shell / de'prived of 'life
 and `vigour // Let's `ask to ourselves // Is the
 'Spirit in ,me / and my 'church a'live or ,lifeless //

'Prayer

*Holy ,Spirit of God / be my de'fence / when I give 'way
 to temp'tation / and my 'guide when I seek to 'live ac-
 cording to the `rule of faith // Let 'me and my 'church be
 made 'worthy of re'ceiving you by re,pentance / and
 bearing the 'fruit of ,holiness / by being 'watered by the
 'living water that you `are // When 'I and my 'church
 become a 'dry and ,fruitless tree / may your 'living wa-
 ter flow ,into us / to make us ,grow / so 'as to bear your
 'gifts and ,fruits / to the 'benefit of 'people all a'round us
 // A`men //*

Jn 16:12–15

'Trinity `Sunday



I 'still have 'many things to `say to you / but you
cannot `bear them ,now // (v. 12)



The 'author of the 'letter to the ,Hebrews /
be'gins the letter ,saying / Long a,go / God
'spoke to our ,ancestors / in 'many and
various 'ways by the `prophets / but in 'these last
,days / he has 'spoken to us by the `Son // He is the
re'flection of 'God's ,glory / and the e'xact 'imprint
of 'God's very `being (Heb 1:1–3) // 'These verses
in the letter su,ggest / that 'God's reve'lation of
himself 'through his ,Son / is 'perfect and
com`plete // ,If so / 'how come that God's ,Son /
Christ 'Jesus himself comes out with the ,state-
ment / that we read as the 'first in to'day's gospel
,passage / and which I 'quoted in the be'ginning //
I 'still have 'many things to `say to you / but you
cannot `bear them ,now // For ,centuries / theo'lo-
gians have 'pondered the 'meaning of this `state-
ment by Jesus / but a de'finitive and final ,answer
to the problem / is still e'luding the human `mind
/ and the 'reason for the human 'failure is to be

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

found in the `verse itself / you cannot `bear them
,now //

We 'have to ad,mit / that 'faith is the state of
,mind / 'willing to 'move between under'standing
and `mystery // To'day when we co'mmemorate
Trinity ,Sunday / or the 'feast of Holy ,Trinity / it
is an o,casion for us / to ac'cept the 'limits of our
,knowledge / and 'simply to 'glorify the Holy
'Trinity //

No 'doubt ,the truth / that 'God's revelation 'in
Jesus is com,plete / as stated in 'Hb ,1 / '1-`3 //
Verse '12 in to'day's gospel ,passage / I 'still have
'many things to `say to you / but you cannot `bear
them ,now / 'doesn't mean that revelation 'in Jesus
is incom,plete / that there is `more to come // If
we 'read the verse in its 'own setting of a 'long and
de'manding 'teaching to the di'sciples / we come
to under,stand / that it is the ,limits of the dis-
ciples / and 'not the incom,pleteness of Jesus /
which is the 'thrust of this `passage // It is 'not that
'Jesus cannot `tell / it is that the di'sciples cannot
'bear everything just `yet // What the 'promised
'Spirit will ,bring / is 'guidance that will 'lead and
provoke ,them / and ,us / into 'deeper un-
der,standing / of what was re'vealed through Jesus
'life and his `teachings //

The advocate / the Holy ,Spirit / whom the
 'Father will send in my ,name / will teach you
 ,everything / and re'mind you of 'all that I have
 `said to you // (Jn 14:26)

'God's reve'lation takes 'place in `two phases:
 the ,first one is / when Christ him'self teaches /
 the ,second / when he 'teaches `through the Spirit
 // Teaching ,by Christ / and teaching ,through the
 Spirit / are in 'different `modes // Neverthe,less /
 what the 'Spirit teaches will be the 'same as what
 'Jesus taught // The 'Spirit will give 'life to 'Jesus'
 `teachings // The 'Spirit will give ,further light /
 for 'Jesus' teachings to be made 'more in'telligible
 // But the Spirit 'won't be teaching `anything ,new /
 because he will 'not speak on his `own / but will
 'speak what ever he `hears (Jn 16:13) //

Jesus re,vealed to the world / 'things as in'struc-
 ted by the `Father (Jn 8:28) // But it is 'not e,nough
 / that reve'lation through Christ ,stay / 'just on an
 ex'ternal ,realm / or as obj'ective `facts // Jesus
 him'self has 'stressed the ne'cessity of this (Jn
 9:31–32) // Thus the ,role of the Spirit / is to
 in,teriorize the revelation by Jesus / so as to 'make
 it the 'source or 'fountain of Christian `life // What
 the ,Spirit gives / is the 'fullness of 'truth that 'Je-
 sus' 'revelation repre'sents // When the Spirit of
 ,truth comes / he will 'guide you into `all the truth

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

// Again Jesus' own ,words / the ,advocate / the Holy ,Spirit / whom the 'Father will send in my ,name / will teach you ,every thing / and re'mind you of 'all that I have `said to you // (Jn 1'4:26) / 'point to `this fact // The 'word in the verse re'mind / carries the meaning of under'standing the 'meaning of a 'prophecy or `vision // ,If so / teaching ,by the Spirit / is the 'deep under,stand-ing / and interi'orization of the reve,lation / `through Christ //

It may be re,called / that 'even on the 'night be-fore Christ's ,passion / the di'sciples did not 'fully under,stand / 'who Jesus ,was / and 'what he was about to a'ccomplish for the sal'vation of the world // He had 'taught them `many things / and they be'lieved that they were 'ready for ,anything / that he might `ask of them / but in a few ,hours / they would 'all have de,serted him / and fled into `hiding // It must have been in the 'forty ,days / between his Resurr'ection and his A,scension / that he un,folded to them / the 'deep ,truths / from which they could go ,out / and be'gin to build his `Church // In 'further ,time / the 'Church came to under,stand / 'more of that which had al'ready been 'partly re,vealed / and which 'now became the de'veloped 'doctrines of Christ'ianity // But it must 'always be borne in ,mind / that the

human ,mind / during 'life on ,earth / 'cannot bear the 'deepest ,mysteries / ex'cept through ,faith / and through 'images drawn from ex'perience in this `world // As we 'praise the Holy ,Trinity / and 'sing the hymns of ,glory today / we ac,knowledge / that 'reason and 'intellect can take us a 'little 'way to`wards God / but that 'much remains be'yond our under`standing // The di'sciples were 'told all that they ,needed to know / at the 'time when they were 'ready to re`ceive it // The 'grace of God does the 'same for `us //

,Therefore / we 'have to be ever ,ready / to re-ceive the 'grace of God the Holy ,Spirit brings us / 'anytime of his 'will and `choice / as his 'working is like that of the 'blowing of `wind // ,Therefore / it is the una'voidable 'duty and obli'gation of a ,Christian / to under'stand Jesus' 'teaching ,through the Spirit / and give re'sponse to it in one's `life // So 'let's prepare our,selves / to take 'in the 'loving inspi'rations of the Holy ,Spirit / the Con`soler // Let's sub'ject ourselves to a process of re`pentance / and 'thus turning 'out re'newed hu-man ,beings / and become 'God's 'instruments in re'creating the `world //

'Prayer

'Holy and 'Blessed ,Trinity | 'source of all ,life | ,truth |
and ,wisdom | 'teach me so to 'reverence the ,mystery of
faith | that I shall 'live more ,fully | as a `child of God ||
Give me a 'thankful 'heart for what I ,know | hu'mility
not to 'seek that which is be'yond my human un-
der,standing | and perse'verance in this ,,world | so that
I may 'come out at the ,end | into the 'presence of the
e'ternal `mystery || Al'mighty ,God | you have 'given me
'knowledge of yourself through the ,scriptures | through
the 'life and 'teachings of your ,Son | and through the
'teaching of the `Church || Ac'cept now the ,faith | that
is con'tent to 'praise the a'ssurance which 'passes un-
der`standing || Give me a 'peaceful ,spirit | to 'rest in
what I have been ,granted | and an 'open ,mind | to re'-
ceive what 'further teaching ,lies | in your 'purpose for
`me || A`men ||

Jn 16:16–24



'Very 'truly I ,tell you / you will 'weep and 'mourn
/ but the 'world will re'joyce / you will have 'pain /
but 'your pain will turn into 'joy // (v. 20)



Christ the Lord who 'conquered the
,world / with his painful 'death and
glorious resurr,ection / fore'seeing his
'sufferings before its o,ccurrence / is pre'senting to
the co,munity of his disciples / through to'day's
gospel ,passage / a 'clear 'warning and 'promise //
Bidding them a fond ,farewell / he is re'minding
them of the mental ,attitude / that should 'guide
them in his 'absence / you will 'weep and 'mourn /
but the 'world will re'joyce / you will have 'pain /
but 'your pain will turn into 'joy // v. 20

'Christ the Lord who ex'hortd his di,sciples /
If 'any want to become my ,followers / let them
de,ny themselves / and take 'up their ,cross / and
'follow me / (Mt 16:24) / is fore'seeing the 'sorrow
his di'sciples will have to go 'through / and he
'quotes the ,scripture // I will ,strike the shepherd
/ and the 'sheep will be 'scattered (Mk 14:27) // His
'promises amidst the 'crises go to giving 'hope /
'your pain will turn into 'joy // And the 'reason for

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

that 'joy is Jesus' resurr'ection // I will 'see you a'gain / and your 'hearts will re'joice / and 'no one will take your 'joy from you // (v. 22)

During this season of Resurr,ection / when the 'mysteries of Resurr'ection become the 'subject of our meditative re,flection / the 'promises that Christ the 'Lord made to his di'sciples are si,gni-ficant / so far as 'we are concerned // Every di's-ciple of ,Christ / who 'tries to put into 'practice the ,teachings of the Lord / is a ,failure / in terms of the 'standards of the world // But 'only when we are 'ready to ,own that failure / we can become 'heirs to that 'life of ,faith / that goes be'yond the standards of the world // If we run 'after the 'tran-sient 'pleasures of ,this world / what we come to 'lose will be the ever'lasing heavenly 'joy and 'peace // When we come to 'suffer a'fflictions and dis,comforts / for ,faith in Christ / during ,life in this world / re'member the ,truth / that our 'sor-row will turn into 'joy and 'peace // This is the ,faith / that 'fired holy 'souls to 'sacrifice even their ,lives / for the di'scipleship and 'love of Lord 'Jesus // And we ,know / it has been ,stated by the ,Lord / that 'Blessed are those who are 'persecuted for 'righteousness sake //

Such is the 'joy 'promised to us by Christ the ,Lord / as 'no one can take a'way from us // Just as

a 'woman giving 'birth to a new 'life learns the
 ,truth / that 'temporary 'pain and 'tears will give
 'way to joy e,ternal / 'Christian ,Life / moving
 from the 'pain and 'helplessness of ,death / and
 nearing the 'threshold of the ,glory of resurrection
 / is one of 'hope // Let the 'truth 'rule our 'mind
 and ,heart / that the 'difficulties and 'failures that
 we go 'through in ,life / are the pre'liminary ,steps
 / that take us to 'eternal 'joy // The co'mmunity of
 a,postles / who were 'joyful over becoming
 'worthy of bearing humili'ation for the sake of ,Je-
 sus' name / should 'ever be our inspi'ration // Let's
 'pray for the grace of 'faith in the resurr,ected Je-
 sus / and for 'ever ex'periencing the lasting 'joy
 that it pro'vides in 'life //

In the 'period of time we live ,in / the 'message
 of 'hope holds 'special sig'nificance // In our 'fam-
 ilies and 'countries in ,general / when de'spair and
 dis'content are getting wide'spread in the wake of
 pan'demic COVID-1,9 / it is the 'voice of disi'llu-
 sionment that is heard a'loud // A 'Christian true
 to his ,name / can 'never get 'desperate or
 disa'ppointed // Our 'youth have to 'specially take
 'note of this // 'Certain ide'ologies mainly im'por-
 ted from western ,countries / and philo'sophical
 'thoughts stating 'life to be a ,curse / are getting
 'circulated 'fast in 'our part of the world as ,well /

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

through some 'literary cre'ations and pessi'mistic
'writings // The 'authors of these cre'ations 'pose
themselves as pro'gressives in the society // It is in
'these 'vulnerable and 'tempting ,circumstances /
we have to 'go ahead with pro'phetic `courage //

A'gain there is found a ,tendency / mostly
among some `charlatan psy,chologists / to depict
spiritual ,life / involving ,prayer / 'fasting and
other 'acts of self ,sacrifice / as 'cheap and 'hollow
demon'strations of `piety // This is in 'no 'way a
'proper a,pproach / in 'dealing with the re`ality //
'Followers of 'Christ are ,bound to believe / that a
'life of sacrifice is the 'sure herald of a 'glorious
'life // Those 'charlatans ,argue / that when
'people go by gratifying their natural ,instincts / it
leads to their self-'fulfilment and 'fullness of `life //
But it is im'possible for one to 'step on the path of
,glory / by sub'mitting themselves to all the 'in-
stincts of the `body // Mortifi'cation of the ,senses
/ ,fasting / and ,penance / are in'variable 'elements
of the `way of Christ / who passed 'over to re-sur`rection // It may be con,cluded / that the
'forms of 'fast and penance may `change / in ac-
cordance with the 'changes as 'needed in different
,places / ,times / 'sections of `people / but one
'cannot put it a'side alto`gether // May the 'sojourn
through 'various a'fflictions make us 'heirs to

,heaven / 'full of i'mmortal `glories // 'There the
ful'filment of the 'Lord's 'promise will take ,place /
I will 'see you a`gain / and your 'hearts will re,joice
/ and 'no one will take your `joy from you (Jn
16:22) //

Jn 17:20–26



I ask not 'only on behalf of ,these / but 'also on behalf ,those / who will be'lieve in me through their ,word / that they may 'all be `one // As ,you Father / are in ,me / and 'I am in ,you / may 'they also be in ,us / so that the 'world may be'lieve that you have `sent me // (vv. 20–21)



The 'topic of re'flection and medit'ation in to'day's gospel ,passage / is a 'part of 'Jesus inter'cessory `prayer // The 'whole of chapter 17 in the 'gospel by 'John is the ,prayer / the e'ternal 'priest made to his ,Father / be'fore his fond 'farewell to his di'sciples / in antici'pation of his de'parture from this `world // 'This prayer has `three parts / ,First / he 'prays for his 'own glorifi`cation // Re'membrance of his pre'human e'xistence and its ,glory (5) / gave him `courage // 'Next he prays for his 'own di'sciples / who 'are to carry 'on his 'mission in the `world / and then ,lastly / his 'prayer is for all ,those / who are to be,lieve on him / thanks to the 'word proclaimed by his di'sciples //

The 'time of 'death to 'glorify 'Jesus is `imminent // Jesus 'prays for his glorifi`cation // His 'mis-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

sion was to give e'ternal 'life to ,all / who were en'trusted to him // By com,pleting that mission / Jesus 'glorified the 'Father // Jesus ,prays / that he be e'nabled to 'see the ,glory / the 'Father has given him be'fore the world e'xisted // We 'too are to have a 'share in ,his glory / when 'we have fulfilled the 'Father's 'will // The 'Father's will has been re,vealed / through the 'holy 'word of the 'Lord // The 'content of Jesus' 'prayer for the di,sciples / is made 'clear in the 'following 'verses / pro'tect them in your 'name / pro'tect them from the 'evil one / 'sanctify them in the 'truth // The 'content of 'all these 'three petitions / boils 'down to 'one and the 'same // Just as he him,self / as 'one ,sent by the Father / 'finished the 'work that He ,gave him to do / his own di'sciples living in the ,world / should ful'fil the 'mission they are en'trusted with / in all fi'delity // Be'cause the di'sciples are 'weak human ,beings / and 'live in a 'world full of ,evil / they are 'badly in need of 'God's 'graces in ,plenty / to ful'fil their di'vine 'mission // ,Therefore / 'Jesus prayed 'for them // To'day's 'Christians as ,well / who 'are to be the 'salt of the 'earth and 'light of the ,world / have to 'constantly 'seek God's ,help / in the dis'charge of their 'mission //

Jesus ,prays / not 'only on behalf of he
 di,sciples / but 'also on behalf of ,those / who
 be'lieve in him through `their word // The 'con-
 tent of the 'prayer is made 'clear in the ,chapter /
 vv. '20–2`6: they 'all be `one /

as ,we are one / `they be one /
 they become 'perfect in `unity /
 you have as 'much love for ,them / 'as you have
 for `me... //

'Through these ,words / Jesus 'prays to his
 ,Father / for the 'love and soli,darity / the dis'ciples
 'ought to have among them`selves // What Jesus
 ,prays for is / the suc'cess of his 'followers in their
 'missionary ac'tivities / I ,pray / that as ,you father
 / are in ,me / and 'I am in ,you / may 'they also be
 in ,us / so that the 'world may be'lieve that you
 have `sent me (v. 21) //

As the ,Father / the ,Son / and the Holy 'Spirit
 are com'pletely ,one in love / those who be'lieve in
 ,Christ / should 'live and act in `love / so that the
 'world may ,know / that the 'Father ,sent the Son /
 and that the sal'vific 'mission of the ,Son / is 'still
 being con,tinued / through the dis'ciples of `Christ
 / and 'thus all may come to 'see the di'vine ,glory /
 that 'Jesus had been ,given / before the foun'da-

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

tion of the `world / and there'by all be e'nabled to find sal'vation //

A 'thinking 'man can under'stand the ,relev-
ance / of the inter'cessory prayer of 'Jesus for the
di'sciples // For the 'last '20 ,centuries / the
'Church has 'worked a ,lot / to ful'fil 'physical
needs of 'men in the `world // 'World today
'knows and under'stands the ,Church / through its
'various insti'tutions 'excellently `run by it // But
,sad to say / 'nowhere on 'earth is to be 'seen a
church co,m,munity / that 'loves and ,serves the
world / with the 'heart of `Christ // The Good
'News is pro'claimed on the `pulpits // Procla'ma-
tion of the 'gospel does'not take ,place / in the
'lives of the Church `members // Di'visions and
dis'sensions are on ,increase / wi'thin and out'side
the ,Church / in 'regional and 'global `levels //

'Christian 'witness is in 'no 'way ,possible / for a
gene'ration deprived of `faith //

The 'scandal of di,vision / 'weakens 'Christian
,witness / in an in'creasingly 'secular `world // It
'was in the ,mission field / that the 'need of 'unity
was dis'covered / and ,now / all 'Christians have
become `missionaries // But as ,usual / we are 'li-
able to re'gard ,problems / as u'nique to the `mod-
ern age // There were dis'putes and di'visions
from the be'ginning of the `Church / St 'Paul

found 'rival 'claimants for ,leadership / in the 'new 'Church at `Corinth / the 'great age of the ,Fathers / was 'torn with ,bitter / and sometimes 'violent dis`putes / the 'final 'break between the 'churches of the 'East and the ,West came / in 1'05`4 / the Re-for'mation di`vided the 'Western Church 'still `fur-ther // 'Now as we draw 'closer to'gether a,gain / though 'not to all ex`ternal a,pppearance / we 'need not 'fear 'bland uni,formity / and a 'loss of 'loved tra`ditions // Our di`versity in ,practice / may be 'part of our `glory / as di`versity is the 'glory of God's cre`ation // We can 'worship in 'different ,ways / if we 'learnt to 'say with ,one voice / Jesus 'Christ is ,Lord / to the 'glory of 'God the `Father' (Phil 2:11) //

Had we 'yet had the 'will to ful`fil the final ,wish of Jesus / that 'they may be ,one / as `we are one (v. 12) // This 'unity will be ,possible / 'only when there is the 'eager de,sire / for co'mmunion with the 'Father and the `Son // 'Shedding the ,selfish-ness / that keeps us a'way from ,this communion / and getting 'rid of the 'Spirit of the ,world / 'let's start a 'new 'life in the ,Trinity / as we 'did in our `baptism // Just as Jesus gave 'glory to the ,Father / by 'finishing the ,job given him / and just as the a'-postles a'ccomplished the 'mission Jesus en,trust-
ed to them / by re'ceiving the Holy ,Spirit / for 'us

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to ful'fil our 'work in fi,delity / this 'change has to
take 'place in us `necessarily // We 'must whole'-
heartedly re'ceive the 'Lord's call to `unity //

Jn 20:19–29



'Blessed are those who have ,not seen / and 'yet
have come to be\lieve // (v. 29)



To-day's gospel ,passage / na'rrates 'two 'in-
stances of the a'ppearance of the 'Risen
Lord 'Jesus to his di\sciples // The 'two
a'ppearances took 'place in Je\rusalem / the 'first
on Easter ,Sunday / in the 'absence of St \Thomas
/ and the ,second / a ,week later / in the \presence
of St Thomas //

Following the ,death of Christ / his di'sciples
got to'gether in 'secret in the ,house / where they
had the 'Last 'Supper \with him // They 'spent the
time ,there / with 'doors ,locked / for 'fear that the
'top o'fficials of 'Sanhedrin Council would 'come
for ,sure / to a'rrest and 'punish them as ,well / as
the 'followers of \Christ // It was in ,this context /
Christ 'Jesus on the 'day of his Resurr,ection / in
the ,evening / a'ppeared in their ,midst / with a
'greeting of \peace // Levi'tation is a 'special 'qual-
ity of the 'body of Resurr,ected Christ / with
which he could enter the 'room wherein were the
di,sciples / with the 'doors \locked // But 'even in a

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,glorified body / the 'person could be `recognized
// Trans'mission of i'deas as well took `place // The
'Lord gave his di'sciples the au'thority to for'give
sins // On 'this o,ccasion / apostle 'Thomas was
not `with them // Though the 'other disciples 'told
him of having 'seen the Lord and ,other things /
he was ,adamant / that he 'wouldn't be,lieve such
things / un'less he could 'touch the Lord in `per-
son //

St 'Thomas had al'ready had an under'standing
of ,Christ's death / be'fore it 'actually `happened //
The 'proof for this is the ,words he said / when
'Lord the Saviour set 'out his 'journey to ,Bethany
/ to raise 'Lazar from the `dead / Let's 'also go that
we may `die with him (Jn 11:16) // At the ,same
time / it 'doesn't seem St Thomas ex'pected a re-
surr`ection of Jesus // ,Therefore / when the ,other
disciples said / that they had ,seen our Lord / he
couldn't be`lieve it as well // To'day we come
a'cross several ,people / who pre'tend they have
`faith / when in 'fact they `have it not //

A ,week later / 'Christ the Lord a'gain appeared
to the di'sciples / with the 'usual greeting of `peace
// The 'Lord this ,time / fulfils the 'adamant de'sire
of ,Thomas the apostle / to 'see the Lord in ,per-
son / for 'him to believe in his resurr`ection // The
a'pistle who ex'perienced the ,Lord's resurrection

/ cried 'out in 'full `faith / My ,Lord / and my `God
 // Thus his 'faith was made `perfect // In the style
 of 'sermon on the ,mount / the ,Lord declared /
 'Blessed are those who have ,not seen / and 'yet
 have come to be`lieve (Jn 20:29) // The a'postle's
 procla,mation of faith / My 'Lord and my ,God / is
 his re'sponse to the di'vine reve,lation / that the
 'one who be`lieves that 'Christ the Son of ,Man / is
 the 'Son of the ,living God / has 'eternal `life //
 'This is the 'essence of ,faith / that 'leads to 'life
 e`ternal / 'God the ,Son / the 'second person of
 'Trinity became `man // We ,must believe / that in
 ,that man (Christ) / di'vine nature and 'human
 nature are 'blended into 'one without `blemish //
 The 'practical style of ,faith / 'now in prevalence in
 the 'Church of ,Christ today / is 'nothing other
 than `this //

What is re'flected in the so called unbe'lie' of
 Apostle ,Thomas / is the 'eager de'sire to ,see the
 resurrected Jesus / and the ex'pression of his ,right
 to it / as an a`postle // That 'Lord Jesus was 'ready
 for his ,second appearance / in the 'presence of
 the a'postle / was 'also in 'loving recog'nition of
 the a'postle's 'genuine and sin'cere de,sire / and
 his apo'stolic right to `see Jesus // It was Jesus'
 in,tention / that the Church co'mmunity be built
 ,up / on the foun'dation of 'faith in Resurr`ection

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experience // With 'this end in ,view / he got them
all con'vinced of the e'vent of his resurre'ction //
It was ,necessary / that apostle 'Thomas as 'well get
that con,viction / and thus 'grow in Christ ex'peri-
ence // It is not co,rrect / to con'sider the Lord's
,words to apostle Thomas / Have you be,lieved /
because you have ,seen me // 'Blessed are those
who have ,not seen / and 'yet have come to
be'lieve / as a ,reprimand to the apostle / for his
so-called unbe'lie'f // 'These are Lord's ,words
uttered / fore'seeing 'thousands of his ,followers /
to 'live in the suc'ceeding `ages // Though they
'may not 'see him in ,person / they are ,blessed /
when they be'lieve in him / by having their 'faith
in ,God's word / as pro'claimed and 'documented
by the di,sciples of Christ / which they had
di'rectly ,seen / and under'stood in the `company
of Jesus // Through ,that Faith / we will 'all be
'blessed // We will 'also be blessed 'through Christ
ex,perience / by re'ceiving the ,sacraments / and
by leading our 'lives in a'ccordance with `that faith
// ,Only thing is / we should put 'in constant 'effort
to 'deepen our Christ ex,perience / by way of 'l-
istening to God's ,word / receiving 'Christ in the
,sacraments / and 'witnessing to 'Christ in our
'daily `lives //

'Just as Jesus 'quenched the thirst of apostle
 'Thomas for resurr'ection ex,perience / Jesus will
 'bless for ,sure / the 'honest and sin'cere en,deav-
 ours that we make / for 'true Christ ex`perience //
 The 'Lord is even ,close to those / who 'seek him
 in their `heart // Not 'only in our ,prayer life / but
 in the 'temporal ,needs / and 'business ac'tivities
 of our 'life on ,earth / the 'Lord is `with us // We
 'read in the ,gospels / that 'after the cruci'fixion of
 the ,Lord / the di'sciples losing ,heart / re'turned
 to their 'old fields of `work // The resurr'ected Je-
 sus how,ever / a'ppeared in their ,midst / and
 made their 'efforts suc`cessful // It is 'true of 'us as
 `well // It is the ,faith in Jesus / that brings to ,suc-
 cess / 'even our 'earthly en'deavours and ac'tivities
 //

Jn 20:19–29



Then the ,other disciple / who reached the tomb
,first / `also went in / and 'he 'saw and be`lieved //
(v. 8)



To'day being Easter ,Sunday / 'let's have a
'spiritual 'journey to the gospel e'vent we
just ,listened to / in the company of the
great ,lover of Jesus / Mary ,Magdalene / and the
'two di,sclples of Jesus / 'Peter and ,John / whose
'visit to 'Jesus' empty ,tomb / is the 'highlight of
to'day's gospel `passage //

Mary 'Magdalene is ,one / who ex'perienced
the `love of Jesus // She 'did have a 'personal love
re'lationship with 'Jesus // The 'Lord's death 'sank
her into never-`ending `sorrow // 'Now she has the
'eager de,sire / to 'get some ,solace / by 'seeing at
'least his `body // She moved 'forward with her
'own system of 'faith in ,life / 'searching for the
one ,dead / a`mong the dead // On ,nearing the
,tomb / she was given the 'shock of her ,life / to
'see that the 'stone had been re`moved from the
tomb (Jn 20:1) // In ,fact / what is re,moved from
the tomb / is her 'faulty 'system of `faith in life /
which of course she does 'not under`stand // For

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the 'same ,reason / she did 'not go ,into the tomb /
did 'not ex'perience the ,truth / and did 'not per'-
ceive the dis'tortion of her faith //

Mary 'Magdalene in 'no time made her 'way to
in'form 'Peter and 'John about the `matter // No
'sooner were they in,formed of the matter / then
'they as well set `out (Jn 20:4) // (According to
'Jewish ,law / for a 'fact to be a'pprised as ,truth /
the confir'mation of it should be done by 'two
`witnesses) // This 'journey they had to be'gun
long 'back in `Jesus / and 'now it is 'nearing its
`goal // This 'journey to the 'tomb is from un'truth
to ,truth / from 'darkness to ,light / and from
mor'alinity to immor'alinity // To re'veal the su'preme
au'thority of ,Peter as it were / he who was 'follow-
ing 'John in the ,run / came however ,forward /
and went 'into the tomb `first (Jn 20:7) / `followed
by ,John / and 'they 'saw and be'lieved (Jn 20:8) //
Thus their 'journey to 'real 'faith came to ful,fil-
ment / by ex'periencing the `truth // Their faith
con'ceptions hitherto were ,broken down / to get
'new 'insight and 'vision of `life 'Why do you look
'for the 'living among the `dead // (Lk 24:5)

Now 'let's come to our`selves // Mary 'Mag-
dalene and the di'sciples repre'sent each ,one of us
/ and our co'mmunity // In our co'mmunity and
so,ciety at large / we come to 'see 'persons belong-

ing to 'four `groups / The 'first group is in the
'place of Mary ,Magdalene / moving with the 'bur-
den of 'pain and `sorrow // These 'people keep
'wailing and ,weeping / in their confron'tation
with 'problems in ,life / and are in dis'tress // An-
'xiety and de'spair are their 'constant com,panions
/ 'keeping them the sort of `worrywarts all
through life //

'People in the ,second class / a'gain hold the
place of Mary `Magdalene // They 'see the 'stone
that had been re`moved // Al'though the 'stones of
super'stition have been rolled a'way with the a'r-
rival of ,Jesus / 'these 'people feel like putting their
,faith / in the 'same old be'liefs // They keep on
,living / in the 'old `style / in `darkness / despite
'seeing the 'door to truth `open // Poet 'Vayalar has
put their 'thinking `this way / 'Heaven and `hell /
'are they on the 'shores of the 'ocean over ,there /
'or the shores right ,here // 'They are at a 'loss to
find 'out the `answer //

The 'third group of 'people go 'by the stand of
'John // They 'stand at the 'door of ,truth / bend
'down to look `in / but they have 'not gone ,in /
and would like to 'look at the 'truth by keeping
a`loof // For ,them / Resurr'ection is 'only a re,ality
/ confined 'only an inte'lectual `realm // Re,sult //
'Faith on ,one side / and 'life on the `other //

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These 'peoples would 'strictly ob'serve all re'ligious de,votions / and 'pray a 'lot / but ,violence / in,justice / black ,marketing / and 'other dis'honest 'practices are 'part of their 'life // Am 'I a ,person / belonging to ,this group // Despite ack'now-
ledging 'life after ,death / 'we prove to be a ,failure / in 'making it become a re'al-ity in 'real 'life // 'James in his 'letter Ch ,2 / verse 1,7 says / 'Faith by itself / if it has no 'works / is 'dead (James 2:17) //

There is 'still a 'fourth 'group in the co'mmunity / ,these / like 'Peter running 'through the path of ,faith / go ,into the tomb / and ex'perience the 'truth // For ,these / 'Jesus' Resurr'ection is an ex'perience // This ex'perience however is ,one / that 'does influence 'life / going to 'sweeten one's life ,vision / life ,goal / and 'crises in 'life // 'This is 'real Christian 'faith //

The Resurr'ection of 'Jesus is the sum 'total of human ,life / and the 'history of 'universe // The 'end of human 'life and 'universe is fore'told 'in Jesus // 'This is the foun,dation / and 'foremost 'faith of Chri'st-ianity // You 'killed the ,Author of life / whom 'God raised from the 'dead // To 'this we are 'witnesses (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:33; 13:30, 31) // If 'Christ has not been ,raised / then our pro-cla'mation has been in ,vain / and your 'faith has been in vain (1 Cor 15:14) //

,Therefore / on 'this feast of Resurr,ection /
 'let's look 'into our`selves // 'Which of the 'four
 'classes of people do we be`long to / Have 'I
 reached the 'fourth 'level of ,faith / 'characterizing
 that of ,Peter // Do I 'live in the ex'perience of the
 'Lord Resurr,ected // Can 'we also proclaim
 through 'words and 'deeds along with the
 A,postles / You 'killed the ,Author of life / whom
 'God raised from the `dead // To 'this we are `wit-
 nesses //

Jn 20:24–29



Unless 'I see the 'mark of the 'nails in his ,hands /
and put 'my finger in the mark of the ,nails / and
'my hand in his ,side / I 'will not be\lieve // (v. 25)



To'day is the 'holy ,day / solemnly 'celebrated in re'membrance (Duk'rana) of St
'Thomas our ,Father in faith / who 'centuries ago / tra'versing the 'vast and turbulent ,seas / landed in our 'land with the 'gospel of our 'Lord Jesus \Christ // This 'day ob'served in commemoration of our ,saintly Father / who met the he'roic death of a ,martyr / by shedding his 'blood in the ,soil of our land / to the 'cause of passing 'on to us ,faith in Christ / comes to us this ,year / with a 'strong ,call / for the re'newal of our Christian \life //

Now 'let's have a 'peek at the ,life of St Thomas / the a'postle and our ,father / and lead a re'newed ,life / after drawing inspi'ration from \that life // In the Holy ,Gospel / there are 'three 'references to St \Thomas the apostle / ,namely / in 'Jn 1,1 / 1,6 / 'Jn 1,4 / ,5 / and 'Jn ,20 / 2'4-2'9 // The par'ticular ,traits / 'highlighted in the perso'nality of Thomas the a,postle / in all 'these three ,instances / are

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'worth paying 'attention to in the `modern world
// Before a ,world / where hy,pocrisy / de,ceit /
'blackmailing and the like have become the ,order
of the day / our 'father Thomas the a,postle /
poses a 'great `challenge //

'These scriptural 'verses make it ,clear for us /
that our Saint 'Thomas possessed a perso,nality /
exuding ,innocence / sin,cerity / and fi`delity //
When the 'other disciples di,ssuaded the Lord /
from 'going to Ju'dea for 'fear of the ,Jews / who
were getting 'ready to ,stone him / St ,Thomas /
who 'sensed that his 'Master wanted to go ,over
there / to raise 'Lazarus from the ,dead / ex'-
pressed his fi,delity / 'innocent ,love / and
sin,cerity / by per,suading his fellow disciples say-
ing / Let's 'also go that we may `die with him //
St Thomas the 'apostle was 'ever ,ready / to su'r-
render his `life for the Master //

We 'see in the Gospel ,Jesus / after ful'filling his
'Father's ,mission in the world / and before re'tir-
ing to his Father's ,house / holding a pro'longed
conver`sation with his disciples // In ,fact / 'hardly
could 'anyone of the disciples under,stand / the
'meaning of what 'Jesus was `saying to them //
'Still they kept ,listening to him / 'as if they fol-
lowed 'everything that Jesus was `telling them //
When ,Jesus said / You 'know the 'way to the place

where I am `going / Apostle ,Thomas / who could not catch ,on what was said / 'asked Jesus in all 'frankness and ,innocence / ,Lord / we do 'not know `where you are going // 'How can we 'know the `way // Apostle 'Thomas couldn't pre,tend / in a 'manner that he under`stood everything // ,Nat-urally / he 'aired e`xactly what he 'felt in his `heart // And 'this is the e`vent that is de'scribed in 'Jn 1,4 / `5 //

Jesus ,suffered / ,died / and was `buried // In ,fact / the 'whole lot of di'sciples got dis,illusioned / and ,thought / that wha'tever they had 'dreamed of what their 'Master would ,do / had come to `nothing // Apostle 'Thomas as 'well was of the `same view // And when ,told / that in his 'absence the Master had a'ppeared to the ,other disciples / he couldn't be`lieve it // And our saintly 'Father was not ,one / who could be ,made to believe / by being 'told by the disciples in a ,body / that the 'Master had appeared to `them / as he 'wouldn't wear the `mask of faith / and he had 'no ex`peri-ence of it // He was 'not for pretending to be a be,liever / unless he was con'vinced about what he be,lieved / with `real experience / and he would 'make things ,clear / as to 'what he 'felt like in his ,heart / wi'thout wearing any `mask // And 'Lord Jesus him'self probably a'ppreciated the apostle's

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

,stand / and was 'ready to o'blige his so-called un'-
belief or ,stubbornness / by ,granting him / the
'privilege of ack'nowledging his 'Master's 'full
di,vinity / with the decla,ration / My ,Lord / and
my `God // This con'fession of ,faith / by our
,father in faith / proves to be a refu'tation of those
who ,say / that 'Jesus was 'only an in'spired ,man /
a 'human ,teacher / a 'pattern of good `living //
And a'gain our father's confession of ,faith / is the
com'pletion and 'flowering of the confession of
'faith made by St ,Peter / 'You are the Me,ssiah /
the 'Son of the `living God / which re'veals more
of the hu`manity of Christ //

In 'all these 'three gospel ,episodes / the 'spark-
ling 'traits in the personality of St ,Thomas are /
sin,cerity / ,innocence / and fi`delity // And when
we 'imitate our 'father and a'postle St ,Thomas / in
respect of 'these three ,virtues / 'we too stand the
'chance of being given 'new gifts of 'grace and
reve,lation / like our father to the 'benefit of ,oth-
ers / as 'well as our`selves // For the 'modern
'world that we ,live in / which has al'most made a
pro'fession of hy,pocrisy / de,ceit / and ,black-
mailing / St 'Thomas the apostle's 'life and ,wit-
ness / is a 'strong 'call and ,challenge / to turn
'back to a 'new `style of life //

On this 'holy ,day / ob'served in commemo'ra-
tion of the ,martyrdom of our father in faith / let's
look 'into our own ,lives / and take the 'pledge to
lead a 'life of 'faith in all sin,cerity / tainted by 'no
de'ceit or hy`pocrisy //

'Prayerful 'greetings of the 'feast of Duk,rana /
to 'one and `all //

Jn 21:1–14



Now 'none of the disciples dared to ,ask him /
'who are you / because they 'knew it was the 'Lord
// (v. 12)



Be'fore the a'ppearance of the resurr,ected
Christ / re'corded in to'day's gospel ,pas-
sage / 'Christ had appeared to his di's-
ciples ,two times / and re'peated his ,promises to
them / and then 'given them 'necessary di'rections
// But it seems those 'things were not e,nough for
them / to con'firm their 'faith in the 'Lord re-
surr,ected // It was probably be,cause of that / St
'Peter thought of turning 'back to doing his 'old
job of 'fishing // Tra'dition ,tells us / that 'six more
di,sciples of Christ / set 'out along with ,Peter / to
re'sume the job of 'fishing // We are told they
were Na,thanael (Bar,tholomew) / 'sons of
Zebedee 'James and ,John / 'Andrew and 'Philip //
'These headed 'straight for lake Ti'berias for fish-
ing // If this re'sumption of their 'old pro'fession
was for 'sure due to their 'lack of ,faith / and if
they had 'not had this 'third Christ ex,perience /
would Christ's 'church itself have taken ,birth //

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

˘Anyway / what would be more co,rrrect to say
is / that 'Christ the 'Lord as ,well / set 'out along
with the di'sciples // De'spite their 'arduous 'la-
bour all through the ,night / not a 'single 'fish
could they get ˘hold of // When it was 'nearing
,sunrise / their 'boat was not ˘far from the land /
'only about a hundred ˘yards off // Then 'when
they 'acted in accordance with the di'rection from
'Christ who came to their ,help / they caught 'fish
in ˘plenty // They did not under,stand / that it was
the resurr,ected Christ / who is helping them ˘out
// After a ,while / the one who 'first got 'hold of the
,truth / was St ˘John // Then in ,no time / St 'Peter
as well ˘caught it / and 'soon he ,jumped into the
water / with 'minimum clothing 'on to cover his
,nakedness / and 'reached his ˘Lord // The 'rest of
the disciples also a'rived on the 'spot in their
,boat / dragging the 'net full of ˘fish // 'All of them
could 'fully under,stand / that it was 'Christ him'-
self resurr,ected // The e'vents that then ,followed
over there / were e'nough to 'deepen their ˘faith //
As for ,them / from 'there was the 'start of their
,life / 'full of 'sacrifice founded on ,faith / with
whole'hearted coope'ration with God's ˘provid-
ence // Their 'eyes were ,opened / and they ˘knew
him // 'Many who 'knew him only with 'eyes of
,faith / have yet ,seen him / 'waiting on the ,shore /

and cried 'out with the be'loved di'sciple / It is the
'Lord //

The ex'perience of the ,presence of God / that
the 'small group of di'sciples had / under the
'leadership of St ,Peter / e'voke in us 'several life-
'giving 'thoughts //

A good 'number of 'daily ex,periences / carry-
ing di'vine ,messages / come 'close to our ,senses /
in 'moments we 'least ex'pect / in the 'garb of a
,stranger / and on o'ccasions never 'dreamt of //

God ,speaks to us / through 'these experiences //

'Those whom we 'thought of as ,strangers / turn
'out to be our 'own / becoming a 'part of our own
'lives // ,Newspapers / ,books / and other 'various
forms of ,media / 'often play the 'role of these
di'vine 'messengers //

Just as the di'sciples engaged in 'fishing were
'able to i'dentify the 'Lord resurr,ected / when we
sin'cerely and 'zealously 'seek who the ,Lord is / in
our life situ,ations / we come to under'stand
without ,difficulty / that the 'Lord is 'close to us //

'Let's therefore get 'ready to 'listen to God's ,voice
/ wher'e'ever it does 'come from // 'God's voice will
,come / just as the 'wind blows // No ,problem / in
airing the ,grievance / as to 'where it came from //

When that 'voice finds an 'entry into the ,heart /
'life proves to be all suc,cessful / ,graceful / and

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

`peaceful // 'Every ,life / that pur'sues the ,effort /
to di'scern and dis'cover the divine 'force at work
in ,life / turns 'out to be `blessed //

'Feast of our 'Lady of Mt `Carmel

'Every Ju'ly 1'6 brings us the 'solemn 'feast of our 'Lady of Mount `Carmel // The 'mountain range stretching from ,Haifa / 'Israel south'eastward for about 1,5 miles / is 'called the Mount `Carmel //

The 'Hebrew name ,Karmel / 'ordinarily means `orchard / but co'nnotes a `woodland // Since an,tiquity / 'Carmel has been re'garded as a `holy mountain // This 'sacred mountain was 'chosen by ,Elijah / as the 'site for the ,altar / in the con'test between 'him and the 'prophets of `Baal //

The Carmelite 'Order claims at 'least a 'moral de'scent from E,lías / and the 'ancient 'hermits on Mount `Carmel // In the 1,3th century / its 'members had to 'flee to ,Europe / to a'void being 'massacred by the `Saracens / and under the 'generalship of St ,Simon Stock / the 'monks changed from 'solitary to a co'mmunity life // He had 'appealed to our ,Lady / for her pro'tection over his o'ppressed congregation / and on Ju'ly 1,6 / 1'25,1 / she a'ppeared to him at `Cambridge / ,England / and pre'sented to him the 'brown ,scapular / which became the 'prototype of all the `others // 'Mary a'ssured him / that 'all who 'wore it ,faithfully / with 'filial 'love and 'confidence in her 'power and ,goodness / would 'feel her 'powerful

'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

inter,cession / and ob'tain the grace of 'final
perse,verance / and her 'motherly pro'tection at
'death //

'This is the si'gnificance of Ju'ly 1st // The 'Car-
melites all 'over the ,world / 'celebrate this 'feast
with 'due so'lemnity // The Congre'gation of the
'Carmelites of 'Mary I,mmaculate / ('CM'I) in 'In-
dia and ,worldwide / celebrate the 'day with ren-
o'vation of their re'ligious ,vows / followed by
'mutual ex'change of fra'ternal 'greetings and
other fes'tivities // But under,standably enough /
cele'bration of the feast barring the 'spiritual
mode has been 'curtailed this ,year / in the wake
of 'outbreak of 'COVID-19 'worldwide //

New `Year Message

In 'Jesus the 'Word made ,flesh / we have the meeting 'point between Di'vinity and Hu`manity
// When we 'put Jesus at the 'centre of ,life / we get co'nected to the `Person of Jesus / and there'by start getting trans'formed into his peron,ality / in-'creasing in 'wisdom and in ,years / and in di'vine and 'human `favour //

When we put our ,self at the centre of life / we 'feel like sort of going a`drift / wi'thout a di'rection or `purpose //

To ,day / as we 'start the New ,Year / 'let's get our life di'rection ,right / by having 'Jesus at the `centre of our life / and 'not having our`self at the centre / lest we become 'members of an unto'ward gene`ration / as St 'Peter 'warns us in his `letter / a gene'ration going a ,drift / wi'thout any di'rection or `purpose / a gene'ration not 'willing to re'ceive the sal ,vation / that 'Jesus the 'Saviour `brought us / thus getting 'lost by the unto ,ward / 'sudden 'purpose of `crucifying Jesus //

So 'let's not go 'after the 'empty 'idols of our ,own selves / a'llowing our 'life turn `empty with them // Hence the 'challenge posed for us to ,day is / to have 'Jesus the 'Saviour at the ,centre of our life / to put our 'hand in ,his / as we 'enter upon the 'New `Year // If we 'venture to ,do so / the New

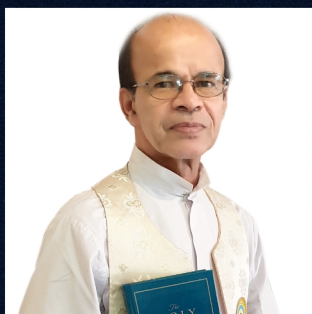
'HOMILIES made more IN'TELLIGIBLE

'Year is to 'bring us for ,sure / a 'fresh ad'venture
every ,morning / and a 'quiet bene'diction every
'night //



'HOMILIES made more INTELLIGIBLE

A collection of homilies based on gospel passages/verses printed with phonetic notations conventionally followed in BBC English Phonetics to show the rhythm and intonation of utterances. The book is a pedagogical venture aimed at helping preachers deliver homilies with international intelligibility.



Fr Dr Jose Pellissery CMI

A former principal of St Aloysius College, Elthuruth, Thrissur, Fr Jose Pellissery CMI had his post-graduation in English Language and Literature from the University Center, Calicut, Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching of English (PGDTE), MLitt and PhD (Linguistics & Phonetics) from EFLU. After his retirement, he served as a Catholic Chaplain to Waikato, New Zealand for three years. Fr Jose conducts courses in English Phonetics, mainly for teachers in schools and students in seminaries including Dharmaram Vidya Kshetran (DVK), Bangalore.



Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI

A newly ordained priest, Fr Linston Olakkengil CMI had his Philosophy studies at Darsana Institute of Philosophy, Wardha, and Theology studies at Jnana Deepa Institute of Theology & Philosophy, Pune.

A master keyboard player, Rev Linston holds to this credit a bachelor's degree with a Rank in BA Multimedia at St. Joseph College of Communication, Changanacherry, Kerala.



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